

OXFORD EDITION

POEMS OF WILLIAM EDMONDSTOUNE AYTOUN

CONTAINING

LAYS OF THE SCOTTISH CAVALIERS, BOTHWELL, AYTOUN'S
CONTRIBUTIONS BOTH TO THE 'BON GAULTIER BALLADS'
AND TO THE 'POEMS AND BALLADS OF GOETHE', 1839;
FIRMILIAN, 1854; POLAND, HOMER, AND OTHER
POEMS (1832); AND OTHER MISCELLANEOUS
POEMS AND TRANSLATIONS



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PREFACE

THIS edition of Aytoun's poems contains, with one exception, all those poems and translations of which the undivided authorship is known to be his. The one exception is his translation of the *Iliad*, Book XXII. This may be found in *Blackwood's Magazine*, vol. xlv, pp. 634-642. Its omission here will be pardoned.

It is by the kind permission of Messrs. William Blackwood & Sons that it has been possible to include Aytoun's contributions to the *Bon Gaultier Ballads* and to *The Poems and Ballads of Goethe*, as determined

Sir Theodore Martin, Aytoun's collaborator in both books. It will be understood, of course, that some of the poems and translations not included in this edition were the joint productions of the two writers.

In 'The Oxford Poets' it is the rule not to give any critical appraisal of the poet, but the present editor may be allowed to say that he finds his greatest satisfaction in having been able to put before the reader all those pieces on which are based Aytoun's claims as a humorist: his contributions to the *Bon Gaultier Ballads* and the anticipatory pseudo-review of *Firmilian*, and *Firmilian* itself. These last two, famous as they are, are now reprinted for the first time.

The miscellaneous character of Aytoun's work not lending itself to chronological arrangement, the poems have been grouped according to character: romantic poems, humorous poems, translations, and juvenilia.

F. PAGE.

March 1920.

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LAYS
OF
THE SCOTTISH CAVALIERS
AND OTHER POEMS

[1849]

The text is that of 1863, the last edition in Aytoun's lifetime. Variant readings of the earlier editions (1849, two editions; 1853; 1863; and, for some poems, a previous appearance in '*Blackwood's Magazine*') are given in the foot-notes. Aytoun's Appendix, which appeared for the first time in the second edition, 1849, is given at the end of the present volume.

[Dedication of the *Lays of the Scottish Cavaliers*, 1849.]

TO
THE RIGHT HONOURABLE
ARCHIBALD WILLIAM MONTGOMERIE,
Earl of Eglinton and Winton, K.T.,
THE PATRIOTIC AND NOBLE REPRESENTATIVE OF
AN ANCIENT SCOTTISH RACE,
THIS VOLUME IS RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED
BY THE AUTHOR.

Montgomerie . . . Winton, K. T.] Hamilton-Montgomerie . . .
Winton, 1849¹, 1849².

EDINBURGH AFTER FLODDEN

[*Blackwood's Magazine*, February 1848]

THE great battle of Flodden was fought upon the 9th of September 1513. The defeat of the Scottish army, resulting mainly from¹ the fantastic ideas of chivalry entertained by James IV, and his refusal to avail himself of the natural advantages of his position, was by far the most disastrous of any recounted in the history of the northern wars. The whole strength of the kingdom, both Lowland and Highland, was assembled, and the contest was one of the sternest and most desperate upon record.

For several hours the issue² seemed doubtful. On the left the Scots obtained a decided advantage; on the right wing they were broken and overthrown; and at last the whole weight of the battle was brought into the centre, where King James and the Earl of Surrey commanded in person. The determined valour of James, imprudent as it was, had the effect of rousing to a pitch of desperation the courage of the meanest soldiers; and the ground becoming soft and slippery from blood, they pulled off their boots and shoes, and secured a firmer footing by fighting in their hose.

'It is owned', says Abercromby, 'that both parties did wonders, but none on either side performed more than the King himself. He was again told that, by coming to bandy blows, he could do no more than another man, whereas, by keeping the post due to his station, he might be worth many thousands. Yet he would not only fight in person, but also on foot; for he no sooner saw that body of the English give way which was defeated by the Earl of Huntley, but he alighted from his horse, and commanded his guard of noblemen and gentlemen to do the like and follow him. He had at first abundance of success; but at length the Lord Thomas Howard and Sir Edward Stanley, who had defeated their opposites, coming in with the Lord Dacre's horse, and surrounding the King's battalion on all sides, the Scots were so distressed that, for their last defence, they cast themselves into a ring; and, being resolved to die nobly with their sovereign, who scorned to ask quarter, were altogether cut off. So say the English writers, and I am apt to believe that they are in the right.'

¹ resulting mainly from] which was mainly owing to '*Blackwood*': mainly owing to 1849¹ ² issue] victory '*Blackwood*'

The combat was maintained with desperate fury until nightfall. At the close, according to Mr. Tytler, 'Surrey was uncertain of the result of the battle: the remains of the enemy's centre still held the field; Home, with his Borderers, still hovered on the left; and the commander wisely allowed neither pursuit nor plunder, but drew off his men, and kept a strict watch during the night. When the morning broke, the Scottish artillery were seen standing deserted on the side of the hill: their defenders had disappeared; and the Earl ordered thanks to be given for a victory which was no longer doubtful. Yet, even after all this, a body of the Scots appeared unbroken upon a hill, and were about to charge the Lord Admiral, when they were compelled to leave their position by a discharge of the English ordnance.

'The loss of the Scots in this fatal battle amounted to about ten thousand men. Of these a great proportion were of high rank; the remainder being composed of the gentry, the farmers, and landed yeomanry, who disdained to fly when their sovereign and his nobles lay stretched in heaps around them.' Besides King James, there fell at Flodden the Archbishop of St Andrews, thirteen earls, two bishops, two abbots, fifteen lords and chiefs of clans, and five peers' eldest sons, besides La Motte the French ambassador, and the secretary of the King. The same historian adds—'The names of the gentry who fell are too numerous for recapitulation, since there were few families of note in Scotland which did not lose one relative or another, whilst some houses had to weep the death of all. It is from this cause that the sensations of sorrow and national lamentation occasioned by the defeat were peculiarly poignant and lasting—so that to this day few Scotsmen can hear the name of Flodden without a shudder of gloomy regret.'

The loss to Edinburgh on this occasion was peculiarly great. All the magistrates and able-bodied citizens had followed their King to Flodden, whence very few of them returned. The office of Provost or chief magistrate of the capital was at that time an object of ambition,¹ and was conferred only upon persons of high rank and station. There seems to be some uncertainty whether the holder of this dignity at the time of the battle of Flodden was Sir Alexander Lauder, ancestor of the Fountainhall family, who was elected in 1511, or that great historical personage, Archibald Earl of Angus, better known as Archibald Bell-the-Cat, who was chosen in 1513, the year of the battle. Both of them were at Flodden. The name of Sir Alexander Lauder appears upon the list of the slain. Angus was one of the survivors; but his son, George, Master of Angus, fell fighting gallantly

¹ ambition] high ambition *Blackwood*'

by the side of King James. The city records of Edinburgh, which commence about this period, are not clear upon the point, and I am rather inclined to think that the Earl of Angus was elected to supply the place of Lauder.¹ But although the actual magistrates were absent, they had formally nominated deputies in their stead. I find, on referring to the city records, that 'George of Tours' had been appointed to officiate in the absence of the Provost, and that four other persons were selected to discharge the office of bailies until the magistrates should return.

It is impossible to describe the consternation which pervaded the whole of Scotland when the intelligence of the defeat became known. In Edinburgh it was excessive. Mr. Arnot, in the history of that city, says—

'The news of their overthrow in the field of Flodden reached Edinburgh on the day after the battle, and overwhelmed the inhabitants with grief and confusion. The streets were crowded with women seeking intelligence about their friends, clamouring and weeping. Those who officiated in absence of the magistrates proved themselves worthy of the trust. They issued a proclamation, ordering all the inhabitants to assemble in military array for defence of the city, on the tolling of the bell; and commanding, "that all women, and especially strangers, do repair to their work, and not be seen upon the street *clamorand and cryand*; and that women of the better sort do repair to the church and offer up prayers, at the stated hours, for our Sovereign Lord and his army, and the townsmen who are with the army."'

Indeed, the Council records bear ample evidence of the emergency of that occasion. Throughout the earlier pages, the word 'Flowdoun' frequently occurs on the margin, in reference to various hurried orders for arming and defence; and there can be no doubt that, had the English forces attempted to follow up their victory, and attack the Scottish capital, the citizens would have resisted to the last. But it soon became apparent that the loss sustained by the English was so severe, that Surrey was in no condition to avail himself of the opportunity; and in fact, shortly afterwards, he was compelled to disband his army.

The references to the city banner contained in the following poem, may require a word of explanation. It is a standard still held in great honour and reverence by the burghers of Edinburgh, having been presented to them by James III, in return for their loyal service in 1482. This banner, along with that of the Earl Marischal, still conspicuous in the Library of the Faculty of Advocates, was

¹ *Foot-note in 'Blackwood'.* The Earl of Angus was succeeded in the Provostship of Edinburgh by Alexander, Lord Home, Great Chamberlain of Scotland, in 1514.

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honourably brought back from Flodden, and certainly never could have been displayed in a more memorable field. Maitland says, with reference to this very interesting relic of antiquity —

‘As a perpetual remembrance of the loyalty and bravery of the Edinburghers on the aforesaid occasion, the King granted them a banner or standard, with a power to display the same in defence of their king, country, and their own rights. This flag is kept by the Convener of the Trades; at whose appearance therewith, it is said that not only the artificers of Edinburgh are obliged to repair to it, but all the artisans or craftsmen within Scotland are bound to follow it, and fight under the Convener of Edinburgh as aforesaid.’

No event in Scottish history ever took a more lasting hold of the public mind than the ‘woeful fight’ of Flodden; and, even now, the songs and traditions which are current on the Border recall the memory of a contest unsullied by disgrace, though terminating in disaster and defeat.

EDINBURGH AFTER FLODDEN

I

News of battle!—news of battle!
Hark! ’tis ringing down the street;
And the archways and the pavement
Bear the clang of hurrying feet.
News of battle! who hath brought it?
News of triumph? Who should bring
Tidings from our noble army,
Greetings from our gallant King?
All last night we watched the beacons
Blazing on the hills afar,
Each one bearing, as it kindled,
Message of the opened war.
All night long the northern streamers
Shot across the trembling sky:
Fearful lights that never beckon
Save when kings or heroes die.

10

II

News of battle! Who hath brought it?
All are thronging to the gate;
‘Warder—warder! open quickly!
Man—is this a time to wait?’

20

¹ No event . . . defeat. *Not in ‘Blackwood’*

And the heavy gates are opened:
Then a murmur long and loud,
And a cry of fear and wonder
Bursts from out the bending crowd.
For they see in battered harness
Only one hard-stricken man;
And his weary steed is wounded,
And his cheek is pale and wan:
Spearless hangs a bloody banner
In his weak and drooping hand— 30
God! can that be Randolph Murray,
Captain of the city band?

III

Round him crush the people, crying,
'Tell us all—oh, tell us true!
Where are they who went to battle,
Randolph Murray, sworn to you?
Where are they, our brothers—children?
Have they met the English foe?
Why art thou alone, unfollowed?
Is it weal or is it woe?' 40
Like a corpse the grisly warrior
Looks from out his helm of steel;
But no word he speaks in answer—
Only with his armed heel
Chides his weary steed, and onward
Up the city streets they ride;
Fathers, sisters, mothers, children,
Shrieking, praying by his side.
'By the God that made thee, Randolph!
'Tell us what mischance hath come.' 50
Then he lifts his riven banner,
And the asker's voice is dumb.

IV

The elders of the city
Have met within their hall—
The men whom good King James had charged
To watch the tower and wall.
'Your hands are weak with age,' he said,
'Your hearts are stout and true;
So bide ye in the Maiden Town,
While others fight for you. 60
My trumpet from the Border-side
Shall send a blast so clear,
That all who wait within the gate
That stirring sound may hear.
Or, if it be the will of Heaven
That back I never come,

And if, instead of Scottish shouts,
 Ye hear the English drum,—
 Then let the warning bells ring out,
 Then gird you to the fray, 70
 Then man the walls like burghers stout,
 And fight while fight you may.
 'Twere better that in fiery flame
 The roofs should thunder down,
 Than that the foot of foreign foe
 Should trample in the town !'

V

Then in came Randolph Murray,—
 His step was slow and weak,
 And, as he doffed his dinted helm,
 The tears ran down his cheek : 80
 They fell upon his corslet
 And on his mailed hand,
 As he gazed around him wistfully,
 Leaning sorely on his brand.
 And none who then beheld him
 But straight were smote with fear,
 For a bolder and a sterner man
 Had never couched a spear.
 They knew so sad a messenger 90
 Some ghastly news must bring ;
 And all of them were fathers,
 And their sons were with the King.

VI

And up then rose the Provost—
 A brave old man was he,
 Of ancient name, and knightly fame,
 And chivalrous degree.
 He ruled our city like a Lord
 Who brooked no equal here,
 And ever for the townsman's rights
 Stood up 'gainst prince and peer. 100
 And he had seen the Scottish host
 March from the Borough-muir,
 With music-storm and clamorous shout,
 And all the din that thunders out
 When youth's of victory sure.
 But yet a dearer thought had he,—
 For, with a father's pride,
 He saw his last remaining son
 Go forth by Randolph's side,

With casque on head and spur on heel, 110
 All keen to do and dare;
 And proudly did that gallant boy
 Dunedin's banner bear.
 Oh! woeful now was the old man's look,
 And he spake right heavily—
 'Now, Randolph, tell thy tidings,
 However sharp they be!
 Woe is written on thy visage,
 Death is looking from thy face:
 Speak! though it be of overthrow— 120
 It cannot be disgrace!'

vii

Right bitter was the agony
 That wrung that soldier proud:
 Thrice did he strive to answer,
 And thrice he groaned aloud.
 Then he gave the riven banner
 To the old man's shaking hand,
 Saying—'That is all I bring ye
 From the bravest of the land!
 Ay! ye may look upon it— 130
 It was guarded well and long,
 By your brothers and your children,
 By the valiant and the strong.
 One by one they fell around it,
 As the archers laid them low,
 Grimly dying, still unconquered,
 With their faces to the foe.
 Ay! ye may well look upon it—
 There is more than honour there,
 Else, be sure, I had not brought it 140
 From the field of dark despair.
 Never yet was royal banner
 Steeped in such a costly dye;
 It hath lain upon a bosom
 Where no other shroud shall lie.
 Sirs! I charge you, keep it holy;
 Keep it as a sacred thing,
 For the stain ye see upon it
 Was the life-blood of your King!

viii

Woe, and woe, and lamentation! 150
 What a piteous cry was there!
 Widows, maidens, mothers, children,
 Shrieking, sobbing in despair!

138 may well] well may 'Blackwood', 1849¹ 150 Woe, and
 100] Woe, woe 1819¹, 1819²

10 LAYS OF THE SCOTTISH CAVALIERS

Through the streets the death-word rushes,
 Spreading terror, sweeping on—
 'Jesu Christ! our King has fallen—
 O Great God, King James is gone!
 Holy Mother Mary, shield us,
 Thou who erst didst lose thy Son!
 O the blackest day for Scotland 160
 That she ever knew before!
 O our King—the good, the noble,
 Shall we see him never more?
 Woe to us, and woe to Scotland!
 O our sons, our sons and men!
 Surely some have 'scaped the Southron,
 Surely some will come again!
 Till the oak that fell last winter
 Shall uprear its shattered stem—
 Wives and mothers of Dunedin— 170
 Ye may look in vain for them!

IX

But within the Council Chamber
 All was silent as the grave,
 Whilst the tempest of their sorrow
 Shook the bosoms of the brave.
 Well indeed might they be shaken
 With the weight of such a blow:
 He was gone—their prince, their idol,
 Whom they loved and worshipped so! 180
 Like a knell of death and judgment
 Rung from heaven by angel hand,
 Fell the words of desolation
 On the elders of the land.
 Hoary heads were bowed and trembling,
 Withered hands were clasped and wrung;
 God had left the old and feeble,
 He had ta'en away the young.

X

Then the Provost he uprose,
 And his lip was ashen white;
 But a flush was on his brow, 190
 And his eye was full of light.
 'Thou hast spoken, Randolph Murray,
 Like a soldier stout and true;
 Thou hast done a deed of daring
 Had been perilled but by few.
 For thou hast not shamed to face us,
 Nor to speak thy ghastly tale,
 Standing—thou a knight and captain—
 Here, alive within thy mail!

Now, as my God shall judge me,
 I hold it braver done,
 Than hadst thou tarried in thy place,
 And died above my son!
 Thou needst not tell it: he is dead.
 God help us all this day!
 But speak—how fought the citizens
 Within the furious fray?
 For by the might of Mary!
 'Twere something still to tell
 That no Scottish foot went backward
 When the Royal Lion fell!' 210

XI

114
 'No one failed him! He is keeping
 Royal state and semblance still;
 Knight and noble lie around him,
 Cold on Flodden's fatal hill.
 Of the brave and gallant-hearted,
 Whom ye sent with prayers away,
 Not a single man departed
 From his Monarch yesterday.
 Had you seen them, O my masters! 220
 When the night began to fall,
 And the English spearmen gathered
 Round a grim and ghastly wall!
 As the wolves in winter circle
 Round the leaguer on the heath,
 So the greedy foe glared upward,
 Panting still for blood and death.
 But a rampart rose before them,
 Which the boldest dared not scale;
 Every stone a Scottish body, 230
 Every step a corpse in mail!
 And behind it lay our Monarch,
 Clenching still his shivered sword;
 By his side Montrose and Athole,
 At his feet a Southron lord.
 All so thick they lay together,
 When the stars lit up the sky,
 That I knew not who were stricken,
 Or who yet remained to die.
 Few there were when Surrey halted, 240
 And his wearied host withdrew;
 None but dying men around me,
 When the English trumpet blew.

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Then I stooped, and took the banner,
 As you see it, from his breast,
 And I closed our hero's eyelids,
 And I left him to his rest.
 In the mountains growled the thunder,
 As I leaped the woeful wall,
 And the heavy clouds were settling
 Over Flodden, like a pall.' 250

XII

So he ended. And the others
 Cared not any answer then;
 Sitting silent, dumb with sorrow,
 Sitting anguish-struck, like men
 Who have seen the roaring torrent
 Sweep their happy homes away,
 And yet linger by the margin,
 Staring wildly on the spray.
 But, without, the maddening tumult 260
 Waxes ever more and more,
 And the crowd of wailing women
 Gather round the Council door.
 Every dusky spire is ringing
 With a dull and hollow knell,
 And the Miserere's singing
 To the tolling of the bell.
 Through the streets the burghers hurry,
 Spreading terror as they go;
 And the rampart's thronged with watchers 270
 For the coming of the foe.
 From each mountain-top a pillar
 Streams into the torpid air,
 Bearing token from the Border
 That the English host is there.
 All without is flight and terror,
 All within is woe and fear—
 God protect thee, Maiden City,
 For thy latest hour is near!

XIII

No! not yet, thou high Dunedin! 280
 Shalt thou totter to thy fall;
 Though thy bravest and thy strongest
 Are not there to man the wall.
 No, not yet! the ancient spirit
 Of our fathers hath not gone;
 Take it to thee as a buckler
 Better far than steel or stone.

245 you] ye 'Blackwood', 1849¹, 1849²

259 wildly] idly 'Blackwood', 1849¹, 1849²

Oh, remember those who perished
 For thy birthright at the time
 When to be a Scot was treason. 290
 And to side with Wallace crime!
 Have they not a voice among us,
 Whilst their hallowed dust is here?
 Hear ye not a summons sounding
 From each buried warrior's bier?
 Up!—they say—and keep the freedom
 Which we won you long ago:
 Up! and keep our graves unsullied
 From the insults of the foe!
 Up! and if ye cannot save them, 300
 Come to us in blood and fire:
 Midst the crash of falling turrets
 Let the last of Scots expire!

XIV

Still the bells are tolling fiercely,
 And the cry comes louder in;
 Mothers wailing for their children,
 Sisters for their slaughtered kin.
 All is terror and disorder;
 Till the Provost rises up,
 Calm, as though he had not tasted 310
 Of the fell and bitter cup.
 All so stately from his sorrow,
 Rose the old undaunted Chief,
 That you had not deemed, to see him,
 His was more than common grief.
 'Rouse ye, Sirs!' he said; 'we may not
 Longer mourn for what is done;
 If our King be taken from us,
 We are left to guard his son.
 We have sworn to keep the city 320
 From the foe, whate'er they be,
 And the oath that we have taken
 Never shall be broke by me.
 Death is nearer to us, brethren,
 Than it seemed to those who died,
 Fighting yesterday at Flodden,
 By their lord and master's side.
 Let us meet it then in patience,
 Not in terror or in fear;
 Though our hearts are bleeding yondor, 330
 Let our souls be steadfast here.
 Up, and rouse ye! Time is fleeting,
 And we yet have much to do;
 Up! and haste ye through the city,
 Stir the burghers stout and true!

14 LAYS OF THE SCOTTISH CAVALIERS

Gather all our scattered people,
 Fling the banner out once more,—
 Randolph Murray! do thou bear it,
 As it erst was borne before:
 Never Scottish heart will leave it,
 When they see their Monarch's gore! 340

XV

'Let them cease that dismal knelling!
 It is time enough to ring,
 When the fortress-strength of Scotland
 Stoops to ruin like its King.
 Let the bells be kept for warning,
 Not for terror or alarm;
 When they next are heard to thunder,
 Let each man and stripling arm. 350
 Bid the women leave their wailing—
 Do they think that woeful strain,
 From the bloody heaps of Flodden,
 Can redeem their dearest slain?
 Bid them cease,—or rather hasten
 To the churches every one;
 There to pray to Mary Mother,
 And to her anointed Son,
 That the thunderbolt above us
 May not fall in ruin yet;
 That in fire and blood and rapine 360
 Scotland's glory may not set.
 Let them pray,—for never women
 Stood in need of such a prayer!—
 England's yeomen shall not find them
 Clinging to the altars there.
 No! if we are doomed to perish,
 Man and maiden, let us fall,
 And a common gulf of ruin
 Open wide to whelm us all!
 Never shall the ruthless spoiler 370
 Lay his hot insulting hand
 On the sisters of our heroes,
 Whilst we bear a torch or brand!
 Up! and rouse ye, then, my brothers,—
 But when next ye hear the bell
 Sounding forth the sullen summons
 That may be our funeral knell,
 Once more let us meet together,
 Once more see each other's face;
 Then, like men that need not tremble, 380
 Go to our appointed place.

God, our Father, will not fail us,
 In that last tremendous hour,—
 If all other bulwarks crumble,
 He will be our strength and tower :
 Though the ramparts rock beneath us,
 And the walls go crashing down,
 Though the roar of conflagration
 Bellow o'er the sinking town ;
 There is yet one place of shelter, 390
 Where the foeman cannot come,
 Where the summons never sounded
 Of the trumpet or the drum.
 There again we'll meet our children,
 Who, on Flodden's trampled sod,
 For their king and for their country
 Rendered up their souls to God.
 There shall we find rest and refuge,
 With our dear departed brave ;
 And the ashes of the city 400
 Be our universal grave !'

THE EXECUTION OF MONTROSE

[*Blackwood's Magazine*, September 1844]

THE most poetical chronicler would find it impossible to render the incidents of Montrose's brilliant career more picturesque than the reality. Among the devoted champions who, during the wildest and most stormy period of our history, maintained the cause of Church and King, 'the Great Marquis' undoubtedly is entitled to the foremost place. Even party malevolence, by no means extinct at the present day, has been unable to detract from the eulogy pronounced upon him by the famous Cardinal de Retz, the friend of Condé and Turenne, when he thus summed up his character:—'Montrose, a Scottish nobleman, head of the house of Grahame - the only man in the world that has ever realized to me the ideas of certain heroes, whom we now discover nowhere but in the Lives of Plutarch - has sustained in his own country the cause of the King his master, with a greatness of soul that has not found its equal in our age.'

But the success of the victorious leader and patriot is almost thrown into the shade by the noble magnanimity and Christian heroism of the man in the hour of defeat and death. Without wishing¹, in any degree, to revive a controversy long maintained by writers of opposite political

398 find] have '*Blackwood's*'

¹ See note on next page.

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and polemical opinions, it may fairly be stated that Scottish history does not present us with a tragedy of parallel interest. That the execution of Montrose was the natural, nay, the inevitable, consequence of his capture, may be freely admitted even by the fiercest partisan of the cause for which he staked his life. In those times, neither party was disposed to lenity; and Montrose was far too conspicuous a character, and too dangerous a man, to be forgiven. But the ignominious and savage treatment which he received at the hands of those whose station and descent should at least have taught them to respect misfortune, has left an indelible stain upon the memory of the Covenanting chiefs, and more especially upon that of Argyle.

The perfect serenity of the man in the hour of trial and death, the courage and magnanimity which he displayed to the last, have been dwelt upon with admiration by writers of every class. He heard his sentence delivered without any apparent emotion, and afterwards told the magistrates who waited upon him in prison, 'that he was much indebted to the Parliament for the great honour they had decreed him'; adding, 'that he was prouder to have his head placed upon the top of the prison, than if they had decreed a golden statue to be erected to him in the market-place, or that his picture should be hung in the King's bed-chamber.' He said, 'he thanked them for their care to preserve the remembrance of his loyalty, by transmitting such monuments to the different parts of the kingdom; and only wished that he had flesh enough to have sent a piece to every city in Christendom, as a token of his unshaken love and fidelity to his king and country.' On the night before his execution, he inscribed the following lines with a diamond on the window of his jail:—

Let them bestow on every airth a limb,
Then open all my veins, that I may swim
To thee, my Maker! in that crimson lake;
Then place my parboiled head upon a stake—
Scatter my ashes—strew them in the air;
Lord! since thou know'st where all these atoms are,
I'm hopeful thou'lt recover once my dust,
And confident thou'lt raise me with the just.

After the Restoration the dust *was* recovered, the scattered remnants collected, and the bones of the hero conveyed to their final resting-place by a numerous assemblage of gentlemen of his family and name.¹

¹ Without wishing . . . family and name] It is impossible now to obliterate the darkest page of Scottish history, which we owe to the vindictive cruelty of the Covenanters—a party venal in

There is no ingredient of fiction in the historical incidents recorded in the following ballad. The indignities that were heaped upon Montrose during his procession through Edinburgh, his appearance before the Estates, and his last passage to the scaffold, as well as his undaunted bearing, have all been spoken to by eyewitnesses of the scene. A graphic and vivid sketch of the whole will be found in Mr. Mark Napier's volume, *The Life and Times of Montrose*—a work as chivalrous in its tone as the Chronicles of Froissart, and abounding in original and most interesting materials; but, in order to satisfy all scruple, the authorities for each fact are given in the shape of notes. The ballad may be considered as a narrative of the transactions, related by an aged Highlander, who had followed Montrose throughout his campaigns, to his grandson, shortly before the battle¹ of Killiecrankie.

THE EXECUTION OF MONTROSE

I

Come hither, Evan Cameron!
 Come, stand beside my knee—
 I hear the river roaring down
 Towards the wintry sea.
 There's shouting on the mountain-side,
 There's war within the blast—
 Old faces look upon me,
 Old forms go trooping past:
 I hear the pibroch wailing
 Amidst the din of fight, 10
 And my dim spirit wakes again
 Upon the verge of night.

II

'Twas I that led the Highland host
 Through wild Lochaber's snows,
 What time the plaided clans came down
 To battle with Montrose.

principle, pusillanimous in action, and more than dastardly in their revenge; but we can peruse it with the less disgust, since that very savage spirit which planned the woful scenes connected with the final tragedy of Montrose, has served to exhibit to the world, in all time to come, the character of the martyred nobleman in by far its loftiest light. '*Blackwood*'

¹ battle] splendid victory '*Blackwood*' 11 dim] old '*Blackwood*'

18 LAYS OF THE SCOTTISH CAVALIERS

I've told thee how the Southrons fell
 Beneath the broad claymore,
 And how we smote the Campbell clan
 By Inverlochy's shore. 20
 I've told thee how we swept Dundee,
 And tamed the Lindsays' pride;
 But never have I told thee yet
 How the great Marquis died.

III

A traitor sold him to his foes;
 O deed of deathless shame!
 I charge thee, boy, if e'er thou meet
 With one of Assynt's name—
 Be it upon the mountain's side,
 Or yet within the glen, 30
 Stand he in martial gear alone,
 Or backed by armed men—
 Face him, as thou wouldst face the man
 Who wronged thy sire's renown;
 Remember of what blood thou art,
 And strike the caiff down!

IV

They brought him to the Watergate,
 Hard bound with hempen span,
 As though they held a lion there,
 And not a fenceless man. 40
 They set him high upon a cart—
 The hangman rode below—
 They drew his hands behind his back,
 And bared his noble brow.
 Then, as a hound is slipped from leash,
 They cheered the common throng,
 And blew the note with yell and shout,
 And bade him pass along.

V

It would have made a brave man's heart
 Grow sad and sick that day, 50
 To watch the keen malignant eyes
 Bent down on that array.
 There stood the Whig west-country lords,
 In balcony and bow;
 There sat their gaunt and withered dames,
 And their daughters all a-row.
 And every open window
 Was full as full might be
 With black-robed Covenanting carles,
 That goodly sport to see! 60

VI

But when he came, though pale and wan,
 He looked so great and high,
 So noble was his manly front,
 So calm his steadfast eye;—
 The rabble rout forbore to shout,
 And each man held his breath,
 For well they knew the hero's soul
 Was face to face with death.
 And then a mournful shudder
 Through all the people crept, 70
 And some that came to scoff at him
 Now turned aside and wept.

VII

But onwards—always onwards,
 In silence and in gloom,
 The dreary pageant laboured,
 Till it reached the house of doom.
 Then first a woman's voice was heard
 In jeer and laughter loud,
 And an angry cry and a hiss arose
 From the heart of the tossing crowd: 80
 Then as the Græme looked upwards,
 He saw the ugly smile
 Of him who sold his king for gold—
 The master-fiend Argyle!

VIII

The Marquis gazed a moment,
 And nothing did he say,
 But the cheek of Argyle grew ghastly pale,
 And he turned his eyes away.
 The painted harlot by his side,
 She shook through every limb, 90
 For a roar like thunder swept the street,
 And hands were clenched at him;
 And a Saxon soldier cried aloud,
 'Back, coward, from thy place!
 For seven long years thou hast not dared
 To look him in the face.'

IX

Had I been there with sword in hand,
 And fifty Camerons by,
 That day through high Dunedin's streets
 Had pealed the slogan-cry. 100
 Not all their troops of trampling horse,
 Nor might of mailed men—

20 LAYS OF THE SCOTTISH CAVALIERS

Not all the rebels in the south
 Had borne us backwards then!
 Once more his foot on Highland heath
 Had trod as free as air,
 Or I, and all who bore my name,
 Been laid around him there!

X

It might not be. They placed him next
 Within the solemn hall, 110
 Where once the Scottish kings were throned
 Amidst their nobles all.
 But there was dust of vulgar feet
 On that polluted floor,
 And perjured traitors filled the place
 Where good men sate before.
 With savage glee came Warristoun
 To read the murderous doom;
 And then uprose the great Montrose
 In the middle of the room. 120

XI

'Now, by my faith as belted knight,
 And by the name I bear,
 And by the bright Saint Andrew's cross
 That waves above us there—
 Yea, by a greater, mightier oath—
 And oh, that such should be!—
 By that dark stream of royal blood
 That lies 'twixt you and me—
 I have not sought in battle-field
 A wreath of such renown, 130
 Nor dared I hope on my dying day
 To win the martyr's crown!

XII

'There is a chamber far away
 Where sleep the good and brave,
 But a better place ye have named for me
 Than by my father's grave.
 For truth and right, 'gainst treason's might,
 This hand hath always striven,
 And ye raise it up for a witness still
 In the eye of earth and heaven. 140
 Then nail my head on yonder tower—
 Give every town a limb—
 And God who made shall gather them:
 I go from you to Him!'

106 trod] stepp'd '*Blackwood*' 123 bright] red '*Blackwood*'
 125 Yea] Ay '*Blackwood*' 138 hath] has '*Blackwood*'

XIII

The morning dawned full darkly,
 The rain came flashing down,
 And the jagged streak of the levin-bolt
 Lit up the gloomy town:
 The thunder crashed across the heaven,
 The fatal hour was come; 150
 Yet aye broke in with muffled beat,
 The 'larum of the drum.
 There was madness on the earth below
 And anger in the sky,
 And young and old, and rich and poor,
 Came forth to see him die.

XIV

Ah, God! that ghastly gibbet!
 How dismal 'tis to see
 The great tall spectral skeleton,
 The ladder and the tree! 160
 Hark! hark! it is the clash of arms—
 The bells begin to toll—
 'He is coming! he is coming!
 God's mercy on his soul!'
 One last long peal of thunder—
 The clouds are cleared away,
 And the glorious sun once more looks down
 Amidst the dazzling day.

XV

'He is coming! he is coming!'
 Like a bridegroom from his room, 170
 Came the hero from his prison
 To the scaffold and the doom.
 There was glory on his forehead,
 There was lustre in his eye,
 And he never walked to battle
 More proudly than to die:
 There was colour in his visage,
 Though the cheeks of all were wan,
 And they marvelled as they saw him pass,
 That great and goodly man! 180

XVI

He mounted up the scaffold,
 And he turned him to the crowd;

149 thunder . . . heaven] heavens were speaking [thunder-
 ing 1849¹] out their wrath '*Blackwood*', 1849¹ 151 aye . . .
 beat] ever sounded sullenly '*Blackwood*', 1849¹ 152 'larum
 of] trumpet and '*Blackwood*', 1849¹

22 LAYS OF THE SCOTTISH CAVALIERS

But they dared not trust the people,
 So he might not speak aloud.
 But he looked upon the heavens,
 And they were clear and blue,
 And in the liquid ether
 The eye of God shone through!
 Yet a black and murky battlement
 Lay resting on the hill. 190
 As though the thunder slept within—
 All else was calm and still.

XVII

The grim Geneva ministers
 With anxious scowl drew near,
 As you have seen the ravens flock
 Around the dying deer.
 He would not deign them word nor sign,
 But alone he bent the knee;
 And veiled his face for Christ's dear grace
 Beneath the gallows-tree. 200
 Then radiant and serene he rose,
 And cast his cloak away:
 For he had ta'en his latest look
 Of earth and sun and day.

XVIII

A beam of light fell o'er him,
 Like a glory round the shriven,
 And he climbed the lofty ladder
 As it were the path to heaven.
 Then came a flash from out the cloud,
 And a stunning thunder-roll; 210
 And no man dared to look aloft,
 For fear was on every soul.
 There was another heavy sound,
 A hush and then a groan;
 And darkness swept across the sky—
 The work of death was done!

NOTES TO 'THE EXECUTION OF MONTROSE'¹.

¹ *'A traitor sold him to his foes'.—L. 25.*

¹ The contemporary historian of the Earls of Sutherland records, that (after the defeat of Invercarron) Montrose and Kinnoul "wandered up the river Kyle the whole ensuing night, and the next day, and the third day also, without any food or sustenance, and at last came within the country of Assynt. The Earl of Kinnoul, being faint for lack of meat, and not able

¹ See also Appendix at end of present volume.

to travel any farther, was left there among the mountains, where it was supposed he perished. Montrose had almost famished, but that he fortuned in his misery to light upon a small cottage in that wilderness, where he was supplied with some milk and bread.' Not even the iron frame of Montrose could endure a prolonged existence under such circumstances. He gave himself up to Macleod of Assynt, a former adherent, from whom he had reason to expect assistance in consideration of that circumstance, and, indeed, from the dictates of honourable feeling and common humanity. As the Argyle faction had sold the King, so this Highlander rendered his own name infamous by selling the hero to the Covenanters, for which "duty to the public" he was rewarded with four hundred bolls of meal.—NAPIER'S *Life of Montrose*.

'They brought him to the Watergate'.—L. 37.

'Friday, 17th May.—Act ordaining James Grahame to be brought from the Watergate on a cart, bareheaded, the hangman in his livery, covered, riding on the horse that draws the cart—the prisoner to be bound to the cart with a rope—to the Tolbooth of Edinburgh, and from thence to be brought to the Parliament House, and there, in the place of delinquents, on his knees, to receive his sentence—viz., to be hanged on a gibbet at the Cross of Edinburgh, with his book and declaration tied on a rope about his neck, and there to hang for the space of three hours until he be dead; and thereafter to be cut down by the hangman, his head, hands, and legs to be cut off, and distributed as follows:—viz., his head to be affixed on an iron pin, and set on the pinnacle of the west gavel of the new prison of Edinburgh; one hand to be set on the port of Perth, the other on the port of Stirling; one leg and foot on the port of Aberdeen, the other on the port of Glasgow. If at his death penitent, and relaxed from excommunication, then the trunk of his body to be interred by pioneers in the Greyfriars; otherwise, to be interred in the Boroughmuir, by the hangman's men, under the gallows.'—BALFOUR'S *Notes of Parliament*.

It is needless to remark that this inhuman sentence was executed to the letter. In order that the exposure might be more complete, the cart was constructed with a high chair in the centre, having holes behind, through which the ropes that fastened him were drawn. The author of the *Wigton Papers*, recently published by the Maitland Club, says, 'The reason of his being tied to the cart was in hope that the people would have stoned him, and that he might not be able by his hands to save his face.' His hat was then pulled off by the hangman, and the procession commenced.

*'But when he came, though pale and wan,
He looked so great and high'.*—LL. 61-2.

'In all the way, there appeared in him such majesty, courage, modesty—and even somewhat more than natural—that those common women who had lost their husbands and children in his wars, and who were hired to stone him, were upon the sight

24 LAYS OF THE SCOTTISH CAVALIERS

of him so astonished and moved, that their intended curses turned into tears and prayers; so that next day *all the ministers preached against them for not stoning and reviling him.*—*Wigton Papers.*

*'Then first a woman's voice was heard
In jeer and laughter loud'.—Ll. 77-8.*

'It is remarkable that, of the many thousand beholders, the Lady Jean Gordon, Countess of Haddington, did (alone) publicly insult and laugh at him; which being perceived by a gentleman in the street, he cried up to her, that it became her better to sit upon the cart for her adulteries.'—*Wigton Papers.* This infamous woman was the third daughter of Huntly, and the niece of Argyle. It will hardly be credited that she was the sister of that gallant Lord Gordon, who fell fighting by the side of Montrose, only five years before, at the battle of Aldford!

*'For seven long years thou hast not dared
To look him in the face'.—Ll. 95-6.*

'The Lord Lorn and his new lady were also sitting on a balcony, joyful spectators; and the cart being stopped when it came before the lodging where the Chancellor, Argyle, and Warristoun sat—that they might have time to insult—he, suspecting the business, turned his face towards them, whereupon they presently crept in at the windows; which being perceived by an Englishman, he cried up, it was no wonder they started aside at his look, for they durst not look him in the face these seven years bygone.'—*Wigton Papers.*

*'With savage glee came Warristoun
To read the murderous doom'.—Ll. 117-18.*

Archibald Johnston of Warristoun. This man, who was the inveterate enemy of Montrose, and who carried the most selfish spirit into every intrigue of his party, received the punishment of his treasons about eleven years afterwards. It may be instructive to learn how *he* met his doom. The following extract is from the MSS. of Sir George Mackenzie:—'The Chancellor and others waited to examine him; he fell upon his face, roaring, and with tears entreated they would pity a poor creature who had forgot all that was in the Bible. This moved all the spectators with a deep melancholy; and the Chancellor, reflecting upon the man's great parts, former esteem, and the great share he had in all the late revolutions, could not deny some tears to the frailty of silly mankind. At his examination, he pretended he had lost so much blood by the unskilfulness of his surgeons, that he lost his memory with his blood; and I really believe that his courage had been drawn out with it. Within a few days he was brought before the parliament, where he discovered nothing but much weakness, running up and down upon his knees, begging mercy; but the parliament ordained his former sentence to be put to execution, and accordingly he was executed at the Cross of Edinburgh.'

*'And God who made shall gather them :
I go from you to Him !'*—Ll. 148-4.

'He said he was much beholden to the parliament for the honour they put on him ; "for", says he, "I think it a greater honour to have my head standing on the port of this town, for this quarrel, than to have my picture in the king's bed-chamber. I am beholden to you that, lest my loyalty should be forgotten, ye have appointed five of your most eminent towns to bear witness of it to posterity."'—*Wigton Papers.*

*'He is coming ! he is coming !
Like a bridegroom from his room'.*—Ll. 169-70.

'In his downgoings¹ from the Tolbooth to the place of execution, he was very richly clad in fine scarlet, laid over with rich silver lace, his hat in his hand, his bands and cuffs exceeding rich, his delicate white gloves on his hands, his stockings of incarnate silk, and his shoes with their ribbons² on his feet ; and sarks provided for him with pearling about, above ten pound³ the elne. All these were provided for him by his friends, and a pretty cassock put on upon him, upon the scaffold, wherein he was hanged. To be short, nothing was here deficient to honour his poor carcase, more be seeming a bridegroom than a criminal going to the gallows.'—*NICHOLL'S Diary.*

*'The grim Geneca ministers
With anxious scowl drew near'.*—Ll. 193-4.

The Presbyterian ministers beset Montrose both in prison and on the scaffold. The following extracts are from the diary of the Rev. Robert Traill, one of the persons who were appointed by the commission of the kirk 'to deal with him' :—'By a warrant from the kirk, we staid a while with him about his soul's condition. But we found him continuing in his old pride, and taking very ill what was spoken to him, saying, "I pray you, gentlemen, let me die in peace." It was answered that he might die in true peace, being reconciled to the Lord and to his kirk.'—'We returned to the commission, and did show unto them what had passed amongst us. They, seeing that for the present he was not desiring relaxation from his censure of excommunication, did appoint Mr. Mungo Law and me to attend on the morrow on the scaffold, at the time of his execution, that, in case he should desire to be relaxed from his excommunication, we should be allowed to give it unto him in the name of the kirk, and to pray with him, and for him, *that what is loosed on 'earth might be loosed in heaven.'* But this pious intention, which may appear somewhat strange to the modern Calvinist, when the prevailing theories of the kirk regarding the efficacy of absolution are considered, was not destined to be fulfilled. Mr. Traill goes on to say, 'But he did not at all desire

¹ downgoings] downgoing 'Blackwood', 1849 ¹ ² ribbons] ribbands 'Blackwood', 1849 ¹ ³ pound] pund 'Blackwood', 1849 ¹, 1849 ² 'on] in 'Blackwood'

to be relaxed from his excommunication in the name of the kirk, yea, did not look towards that place on the scaffold where we stood; only he drew apart some of the magistrates, and spake a while with them, and then went up the ladder, in his red scarlet cassock, in a very stately manner.'

'And he climbed the lofty ladder
As it were the path to heaven.'—LI. 207-8.

'He was very earnest that he might have the liberty to keep on his hat—it was denied: he requested he might have the privilege to keep his cloak about him—neither could that be granted. Then, with a most undaunted courage, he went up to the top of that prodigious gibbet.'—'The whole people gave a general groan; and it was very observable, that even those who, at his first appearance, had bitterly inveighed against him, could not now abstain from tears.'—*Montrose Redivivus*.

THE HEART OF THE BRUCE

HECTOR BOECE, in his very delightful, though somewhat apocryphal Chronicles of Scotland, tells us, that 'quhen Schir James Douglas was chosin as maist worthy of all Scotland to pass with King Robertis hart to the Holy Land, he put it in ane cais of gold, with arromitike and precious unyementis; and tuke with him Schir William Sinclair and Schir Robert Logan, with mony othir nobilmen, to the haly graif; quhare he buryit the said hart, with maist reverence and solempnitie that could be devisit.'

But no contemporary historian bears out the statement of the old Canon of Aberdeen. Froissart, Fordoun, and Barbour all agree that the devotional pilgrimage of the Good Sir James was not destined to be accomplished, and that the heart of Scotland's greatest King and hero was brought back to the land of his nativity. Mr. Tytler, in few words, has so graphically recounted the leading events of this expedition, that I do not hesitate to adopt his narrative:—

'As soon as the season of the year permitted, Douglas, having the heart of his beloved master under his charge, set sail from Scotland, accompanied by a splendid retinue, and anchored off Sluys in Flanders, at this time the great seaport of the Netherlands. His object was to find out companions with whom he might travel to Jerusalem; but he declined landing, and for twelve days received all visitors on board his ship with a state almost kingly.

'At Sluys he heard that Alonzo, the king of Leon and Castile, was carrying on war with Osmyn, the Moorish governor of Granada. The religious mission which he had embraced, and the vows he had taken before leaving Scotland, induced Douglas to consider Alonzo's cause as a

holy warfare; and before proceeding to Jerusalem, he first determined to visit Spain, and to signalise his prowess against the Saracens. But his first field against the Infidels proved fatal to him who, in the long English war, had seen seventy battles. The circumstances of his death were striking and characteristic. In an action near Theba, on the borders of Andalusia, the Moorish cavalry were defeated; and after their camp had been taken, Douglas, with his companions, engaged too eagerly in the pursuit, and being separated from the main body of the Spanish army, a strong division of the Moors rallied and surrounded them. The Scottish knight endeavoured to cut his way through the Infidels, and in all probability would have succeeded, had he not again turned to rescue Sir William Saint Clair of Roslin, whom he saw in jeopardy. In attempting this, he was inextricably involved with the enemy. Taking from his neck the casket which contained the heart of Bruce, he cast it before him, and exclaimed with a loud voice, 'Now pass onward as thou wert wont, and Douglas will follow thee or die!' The action and the sentiment were heroic, and they were the last words and deed of a heroic life, for Douglas fell overpowered by his enemies; and three of his knights, and many of his companions, were slain along with their master. On the succeeding day, the body and the casket were both found on the field, and by his surviving friends conveyed to Scotland. The heart of Bruce was deposited at Melrose, and the body of the 'Good Sir James'—the name by which he is affectionately remembered by his countrymen—was consigned to the cemetery of his fathers in the parish church of Douglas.

A nobler death on the field of battle is not recorded in the annals of chivalry. In memory of this expedition, the Douglasses have ever since carried the armorial bearings of the Bloody Heart surmounted by the Crown; and a similar distinction is borne by another family. Sir Simon of Lee, a distinguished companion of Douglas, was the person on whom, after the fall of his leader, the custody of the heart devolved. Hence the name of Lockhart, and their effigy, the Heart within a Fetterlock.

THE HEART OF THE BRUCE

[*Blackwood's Magazine*, July 1844¹]

I

It was upon an April morn,
While yet the frost lay hoar,
We heard Lord James's bugle-horn
Sound by the rocky shore.

¹ The prose introduction did not appear in '*Blackwood*', where the poem has the sub-title *A Ballad*.

28. LAYS OF THE SCOTTISH CAVALIERS

II

Then down we went, a hundred knights,
All in our dark array,
And flung our armour in the ships
That rode within the bay.

III

We spoke not as the shore grew less,
But gazed in silence back, 10
Where the long billows swept away
The foam behind our track.

IV

And aye the purple hues decayed
Upon the fading hill,
And but one heart in all that ship
Was tranquil, cold, and still.

V

The good Lord Douglas paced the deck—
Oh, but his face was wan!
Unlike the flush it used to wear
When in the battle-van.— 20

VI

'Come hither, I pray, my trusty knight,
Sir Simon of the Lee;
There is a freit lies near my soul
I needs must tell to thee.

VII

'Thou know'st the words King Robert spoke
Upon his dying day:
How he bade me take his noble heart
And carry it far away;

VIII

'And lay it in the holy soil
Where once the Saviour trod, 30
Since he might not bear the blessed Cross,
Nor strike one blow for God.

IX

'Last night as in my bed I lay,
I dreamed a dreary dream:—
Methought I saw a Pilgrim stand
In the moonlight's quivering beam.

17 Lord] Earl '*Blackwood*', paced] walk'd '*Blackwood*', 1849¹
18 Oh, but his face] And oh, his brow (1849² face) '*Blackwood*',
1849¹ 1849² 21 I pray] come hither '*Blackwood*', 1849¹, 1849²
24 needs must] fain would '*Blackwood*', 1849¹, 1849²

X

' His robe was of the azure dye—
Snow-white his scattered hairs—
And even such a cross he bore
As good Saint Andrew bears.

40

XI

"Why go ye forth, Lord James," he said,
"With spear and belted brand?
Why do you take its dearest pledge
From this our Scottish land?"

XII

"The sultry breeze of Galilee
Creeps through its groves of palm,
The olives on the Holy Mount
Stand glittering in the calm.

XIII

"But 'tis not there that Scotland's heart
Shall rest, by God's decree,
Till the great angel calls the dead
To rise from earth and sea!

50

XIV

"Lord James of Douglas, mark my rede!
That heart shall pass once more
In fiery fight against the foe,
As it was wont of yore.

XV

"And it shall pass beneath the Cross,
And save King Robert's vow;
But other hands shall bear it back,
Not, James of Douglas, thou!"

60

XVI

' Now, by thy knightly faith, I pray,
Sir Simon of the Lee—
For truer friend had never man
Than thou hast been to me—

XVII

' If ne'er upon the Holy Land
'Tis mine in life to tread,
Bear thou to Scotland's kindly earth
The relics of her dead.'

XVIII

The tear was in Sir Simon's eye
 As he wrung the warrior's hand—
 'Betide me weal, betide me woe,
 I'll hold by thy command. 70

XIX

'But if in battle-front, Lord James,
 'Tis ours once more to ride,
 Nor force of man, nor craft of fiend,
 Shall cleave me from thy side!'

XX

And aye we sailed, and aye we sailed,
 Across the weary sea,
 Until one morn the coast of Spain
 Rose grimly on our lee. 80

XXI

And as we rounded to the port,
 Beneath the watch-tower's wall,
 We heard the clash of the atabals,
 And the trumpet's wavering call.

XXII

'Why sounds yon Eastern music here
 So wantonly and long,
 And whose the crowd of armed men
 That round yon standard throng?'

XXIII

'The Moors have come from Africa
 To spoil, and waste, and slay,
 And King Alonzo of Castile
 Must fight with them to-day.' 90

XXIV

'Now shame it were,' cried good Lord James,
 'Shall never be said of me,
 That I and mine have turned aside
 From the Cross in jeopardy!'

XXV

'Have down, have down, my merry men all—
 Have down unto the plain;
 We'll let the Scottish lion loose
 Within the fields of Spain!' 100

XXVI

'Now welcome to me, noble lord,
Thou and thy stalwart power;
Dear is the sight of a Christian knight,
Who comes in such an hour!

XXVII

'Is it for bond or faith you come,
Or yet for golden fee?
Or bring ye France's lilies here,
Or the flower of Burgundie?'

XXVIII

'God greet thee well, thou valiant king,
Thee and thy be'led peers—
Sir James of Douglas am I called,
And these are Scottish spears.

11

XXIX

'We do not fight for bond or plight,
Nor yet for golden fee;
But for the sake of our blessed Lord,
Who died upon the tree.

XXX

'We bring our great King Robert's heart
Across the weltering wave,
To lay it in the holy soil
Hard by the Saviour's grave.

120

XXXI

'True pilgrims we, by land or sea,
Where danger bars the way;
And therefore are we here, Lord King,
To ride with thee this day!'

XXXII

The King has bent his stately head,
And the tears were in his eyne—
'God's blessing on thee, noble knight,
For this brave thought of thine!

XXXIII

'I know thy name full well, Lord James;
And honoured may I be,
That those who fought beside the Bruce
Should fight this day for me!

130

32 LAYS OF THE SCOTTISH CAVALIERS

XXXIV

'Take thou the leading of the van,
And charge the Moors amain;
There is not such a lance as thine
In all the host of Spain!'

XXXV

The Douglas turned towards us then,
Oh, but his glance was high!
'There is not one of all my men
But is as frank as I.

140

XXXVI

'There is not one of all my knights
But bears as true a spear—
Then—onwards, Scottish gentlemen,
And think, King Robert's here!'

XXXVII

The trumpets blew, the cross-bolts flew,
The arrows flashed like flame,
As, spur in side, and spear in rest,
Against the foe we came.

XXXVIII

And many a bearded Saracen
Went down, both horse and man:
For through their ranks we rode like corn,
So furiously we ran!

150

XXXIX

But in behind our path they closed,
Though fain to let us through;
For they were forty thousand men,
And we were wondrous few.

XL

We might not see a lance's length,
So dense was their array,
But the long fell sweep of the Scottish blade
Still held them hard at bay.

160

XLI

'Make in! make in!' Lord Douglas cried—
'Make in, my brethren dear!
Sir William of St. Clair is down;
We may not leave him here!'

XLII

But thicker, thicker grew the swarm,
 And sharper shot the rain;
 And the horses reared amid the press,
 But they would not charge again.

XLIII

'Now Jesu help thee,' said Lord James,
 'Thou kind and true St. Clair!
 An' if I may not bring thee off,
 I'll die beside thee there!' 170

XLIV

Then in his stirrups up he stood,
 So lionlike and bold,
 And held the precious heart aloft
 All in its case of gold.

XLV

He flung it from him far ahead,
 And never spake he more,
 But—'Pass thee first, thou dauntless heart,
 As thou wert wont of yore!' 180

XLVI

The roar of fight rose fiercer yet,
 And heavier still the stour,
 Till the spears of Spain came shivering in,
 And swept away the Moor.

XLVII

'Now praised be God, the day is won!
 They fly o'er flood and fell—
 Why dost thou draw the rein so hard,
 Good knight, that fought so well?'

XLVIII

'Oh, ride ye on, Lord King!' he said,
 'And leave the dead to me;
 For I must keep the dreariest watch
 That ever I shall dree!' 190

XLIX

'There lies above his master's heart,
 The Douglas, stark and grim;
 And woe; that I am living man,
 Not lying there by him!

180 wert] were 'Blackwood' misprint 193 above] beside
 'Blackwood', 1849¹ 195 woe, that ... man] woe is me I
 should be here 'Blackwood', 1849¹, 1849² 196 lying there
 by] side by side with 'Blackwood', 1849¹, 1849²

L

'The world grows cold, my arm is old,
And thin my lyart hair,
And all that I loved best on earth
Is stretched before me there.

200

LI

'O Bothwell banks, that bloom so bright
Beneath the sun of May!
The heaviest cloud that ever blew
Is bound for you this day.

LII

'And, Scotland, thou may'st veil thy head
In sorrow and in pain:
The sorest stroke upon thy brow
Hath fallen this day in Spain!

LIII

'We'll bear them back unto our ship,
We'll bear them o'er the sea,
And lay them in the hallowed earth,
Within our own countrie.

210

LIV

'And be thou strong of heart, Lord King,
For this I tell thee sure,
The sod that drank the Douglas' blood
Shall never bear the Moor!'

LV

The King he lighted from his horse,
He flung his brand away,
And took the Douglas by the hand,
So stately as he lay.

220

LVI

'God give thee rest, thou valiant soul!
That fought so well for Spain;
I'd rather half my land were gone,
So thou wert here again!'

LVII

We lifted thence the good Lord James,
And the priceless heart he bore;
And heavily we steered our ship
Towards the Scottish shore.

LVIII

No welcome greeted our return,
 Nor clang of martial tread, 230
 But all were dumb and hushed as death,
 Before the mighty dead.

LIX

We laid our chief in Douglas Kirk,
 The heart in fair Melrose;
 And woeful men were we that day—
 God grant their souls repose!

THE BURIAL-MARCH OF DUNDEE

It is very much to be regretted that no competent person has as yet undertaken the task of compiling a full and authentic biography of Lord Viscount Dundee. His memory has consequently been left at the mercy of writers who have espoused the opposite political creed¹; and the pen of romance has been freely employed to portray as a bloody assassin one of the most accomplished men and gallant soldiers of his age.

In order to do justice to Claverhouse, we must regard him in connection with the age and country in which he lived.² The religious differences of Scotland were then at their greatest height; and there is hardly any act of atrocity and rebellion which had not been committed by the insurgents. The royal authority was openly and publicly disowned in the western districts: the Archbishop of St. Andrews, after more than one hairbreadth escape, had been³ waylaid and barbarously murdered by an armed gang of fanatics on Magus Muir; and his daughter was wounded and maltreated while interceding for the old man's life. The country was infested by banditti, who took every possible opportunity of shooting down and massacring any of the straggling soldiery: the clergy were attacked and driven from their houses; so that, throughout a considerable portion of Scotland, there was no security either for property or for

233 our chief] the Earl 'Blackwood'

¹ writers . . . creed] misrepresentation and malignity 1849¹, 1849² ² In order . . . lived] It was the misfortune of Claverhouse to have lived in so troublous an age and country 1849¹, 1849² ³ had been] was 1849¹, 1849²

life. It was lately¹ the fashion to praise and magnify the Covenanters as the most innocent and persecuted of men; but those who are so ready with their sympathy, rarely take the pains to satisfy themselves, by reference to the annals of the time, of the true character and motives² of those men whom they blindly venerate as martyrs. They forget, in their zeal for religious freedom, that even the purest and holiest of causes may be sullied and disgraced by the deeds of its upholders, and that a wild and frantic profession of faith is not always a test of genuine piety. It is not in the slightest degree necessary to discuss whether the royal prerogative was at that time arbitrarily used, or whether the religious freedom of the nation was unduly curtailed. Both points may be, and indeed are, admitted—for it is impossible altogether³ to vindicate the policy of the measures adopted by the two last monarchs of the house of Stuart; but neither admission will clear the Covenanters from the stain of deliberate cruelty.

After the battle of Philiphaugh, the royalist prisoners were butchered in cold blood, under the superintendence of a clerical emissary, who stood by rubbing his hands, and exclaiming—‘The wark gangs bonnily on!’ Were I to transcribe, from the pamphlets before me, the list of the murders which were perpetrated by the country people on the soldiery, officers, and gentlemen of loyal principles, during the reign of Charles II, I believe that no candid person would be surprised at the severe retaliation which was made. It must be remembered that the country was then under military law, and that the strictest⁴ orders had been issued by the Government to the officers in command of the troops, to use every means in their power for the effectual repression of the disturbances. The necessity of such orders will become apparent, when we reflect that, besides the open actions at Aird’s Moss and Drumclog, the city of Glasgow was attacked, and the royal forces compelled for a time to fall back upon Stirling.

Under such circumstances, it is no wonder if the soldiery were severe in their reprisals. Innocent blood may no doubt have been shed, and in some cases even wantonly; for when rebellion has grown into civil war, and the ordinary course of the law is put in abeyance, it is always impossible to restrain military licence. But it is most unfair to lay the whole odium of such acts upon those who were in command, and to dishonour the fair name of gentlemen, by attributing to them personally the commission of deeds of which they were absolutely ignorant. To this day the peasantry of the western districts of Scotland entertain the idea that Claver-

¹ was lately] is now 1849¹, 1849² ² and motives *not* in 1849¹, 1849² ³ altogether *not* in 1849¹, 1849² ⁴ strictest] strongest 1849¹

house was a sort of fiend in human shape, tall, muscular, and hideous in aspect, secured by infernal spells from the chance of perishing by any ordinary weapon, and mounted on¹ a huge black horse, the especial gift of Beelzebub! On this charger it is supposed that he could ride up precipices as easily as he could traverse the level ground—that he was constantly accompanied by a body of desperadoes, vulgarly known by such euphonious titles as ‘Hell’s Tam’ and ‘the De’il’s Jock,’ and that his whole time was occupied, day and night, in hunting Covenanters upon the hills! Almost every rebel who was taken in arms and shot, is supposed to have met his death from the individual pistol of Claverhouse; and the tales which, from time to time, have been written by such ingenious persons as the late Mr. Galt and the Ettrick Shepherd, have quietly been assumed as facts, and added to the store of our traditionary knowledge. It is in vain to hint that the chief commanders of the forces in Scotland could have found little leisure, even had they possessed the taste, for pursuing single insurgents. Such suggestions are an insult to martyrology; and many a parish of the west would be indignant were it averred that the tenant of its grey stone had suffered by a meaner hand.

When we look at the portrait of Claverhouse, and survey the calm, melancholy, and beautiful features of the devoted soldier, it appears almost incredible that he should have provoked so much calumny and² misrepresentation. But when—discarding modern historians, who in too many instances do not seem to entertain the slightest scruple in dealing with the memory of the dead³—we turn to the writings of his contemporaries, who knew the man, his character appears in a very different light. They describe him as one who was stainless in his honour, pure in his faith, wise in council, resolute in action, and utterly free from that selfishness which disgraced many of⁴ the Scottish statesmen of the time. No one dares question his loyalty, for he sealed that confession with his blood; and it is universally admitted, that with him fell the last hopes of the reinstatement of the house of Stuart.

I may perhaps be permitted here, in the absence of a better chronicler, to mention a few particulars of his life, which, I believe, are comparatively unknown. John Grahame of Claverhouse was a cadet of the family of Fintrie, connected by intermarriage with the blood-royal of Scotland. After completing his studies at the University of St. Andrews, he entered, as was the national custom for gentlemen of good

¹ on] upon 1849¹, 1849² ² have provoked . . . calumny and] ever have suffered under such an overwhelming load of 1849¹, 1849² ³ Footnote in 1849² *Vide* APPENDIX to this volume. ⁴ many of not in 1849¹

birth and limited means, into foreign service; served some time in France as a volunteer, and afterwards went to Holland. He very soon received a commission, as a cornet in a regiment of horse-guards, from the Prince of Orange, nephew of Charles II and James VII, and who afterwards married the Princess Mary. His manner at that time is thus described:—"He was then ane esquire, under the title of John Grahame of Claverhouse; but the vivacity of his parts, and the delicacy and justice of his understanding and judgment, joined with a certain vigour of mind and activity of body, distinguished him in such a manner from all others of his rank, that though he lived in a superior character, yet he acquired the love and esteem of all his equals, as well as of those who had the advantage of him in dignity and estate."

By one of those singular accidents which we occasionally meet with in history, Grahame, afterwards destined to become his most formidable opponent, saved the life of the Prince of Orange at the battle of St. Neff. The Prince's horse had been killed, and he himself was in the grasp of the enemy, when the young cornet rode to his rescue, freed him from his assailants, and mounted him on his own steed. For this service he received a captain's commission, and the promise of the first regiment that should fall vacant.

But, even in early life, William of Orange was not famous for keeping his promises. Some years afterwards a vacancy in one of the Scottish Regiments in the Prince's service occurred, and Claverhouse, relying upon the previous assurance, preferred his claim. It was disregarded, and Mr. Collier, afterwards Earl of Portmore, was appointed over his head. It would seem that Grahame had suspected some foul play on the part of this gentleman, for, shortly after, they accidentally met and had an angry altercation. This circumstance having come to the ears of the Prince, he sent for Captain Grahame, and administered a sharp rebuke. I give the remainder of this incident in the words of the old writer, because it must be considered a very remarkable one, as illustrating the fiery spirit and dauntless independence of Claverhouse.

"The Captain answered, that he was indeed in the wrong, since it was more his Highness's business to have resented that quarrel than his; because Mr. Collier had less injured him in disappointing him of the regiment, than he had done his Highness in making him break his word. "Then," replied the Prince in an angry tone, "I make you full reparation; for I bestow on you what is more valuable than a regiment, when I give you your right arm!" The Captain subjoined, that since his Highness had the goodness to give him his liberty, he resolved to employ himself elsewhere, for he would not longer serve a Prince that had broken his word.

'The Captain, having thus thrown up his commission, was preparing in haste for his voyage, when a messenger arrived from the Prince, with two hundred guineas for the horse on which he had saved his life. The Captain sent the horse, but he¹ ordered the gold to be distributed among the grooms of the Prince's stables. It is said, however, that his Highness had the generosity to write to the King and the Duke, recommending him as a fine gentleman and a brave officer, fit for any office, civil or military.'²

On his arrival in Britain he was well received by the Court, and immediately appointed to a high military command in Scotland. It would be beyond the scope of the present paper to enter minutely into the details of his service during the stormy period when Scotland was certainly misgoverned, and when there was little unity, but much disorder in the land. In whatever point of view we regard the history of those times, the aspect is a mournful one indeed. Church and State never was a popular cry in Scotland; and the peculiar religious tendencies which had been exhibited by a large portion of the nation, at the time of the Reformation, rendered the return of tranquillity hopeless, until the hierarchy was displaced, and a humbler form of church government, more suited to the feelings of the people, substituted in its stead.

Three years after the accession of James VII, Claverhouse was raised to the peerage, by the title of Lord Viscount of Dundee. He was major-general and second in command of the royal forces, when the Prince of Orange landed; and he⁴ earnestly entreated King James to be allowed to march against him, offering to stake his head on the successful result of the enterprise. There can be⁵ little doubt, from the great popularity of Lord Dundee with the army, that, had such consent been given, William would have found more than a match in his old officer; but the King seemed absolutely infatuated, and refused to allow a drop of blood to be shed in his quarrel, though the great bulk of the population of England were clearly and enthusiastically in his favour. A modern poet,⁶ the Honourable George Sydney Smythe, has well⁷ illustrated this event in the following spirited lines⁸:—

Then out spake gallant Claverhouse, and his soul thrilled
wild and high,
And he showed the King his subjects, and he prayed him not
to fly.

¹ he not in 1849¹ ² Footnote in 1849², 1853, 1863: *Memoirs of the Lord Viscount of Dundee*. London: 1714. ³ of not in 1849¹, 1849² ⁴ he not in 1849¹, 1849² ⁵ can be] is 1849¹
⁶ A modern poet] One of the most gifted of our modern poets 1849¹, 1849² ⁷ well] beautifully 1849¹, 1849² ⁸ in the ... lines not in 1849¹, 1849²

40 LAYS OF THE SCOTTISH CAVALIERS

Oh, never yet was captain so dauntless as Dundee—
He has sworn to chase the Hollander back to his Zuyder-Zee!

But though James quitted his kingdom, the stern loyalty of Dundee was nothing moved. Alone and without escort he traversed England, and presented himself at the Convention of Estates, then assembled at Edinburgh for the purpose of receiving the message from the Prince of Orange. The meeting was a very strange one. Many of the nobility and former members of the Scottish Parliament had¹ absolutely declined attending it,—some on the ground that it was not a legal assembly, having been summoned by the Prince of Orange; and others because, in such a total disruption of order, they judged it safest to abstain from taking any prominent part. This gave an immense ascendancy to the Revolution party, who further proceeded to strengthen their position by inviting to Edinburgh large bodies of the armed population of the west. After defending for several days the cause of his master, with as much eloquence as vigour, Dundee, finding that the majority of the Convention were resolved to offer the crown of Scotland to the Prince, and having moreover received sure information that some of the wild frantic² Whigs, with Daniel Ker of Kersland at their head, had formed a plot for his assassination, quitted Edinburgh with about fifty horsemen, and, after a short interview—celebrated by Sir Walter Scott in one of his grandest ballads—with the Duke of Gordon at the Castle rock, directed his steps towards the north. After a short stay at his house of Dudhope,³ during which he received, by order of the Council, who were thoroughly alarmed at his absence, a summons through a Lyon-herald to return to Edinburgh under pain of high treason, he passed into the Gordon country, where he was joined by the Earl of Dunfermline with a small party of about sixty horse. His retreat was timeous, for General Mackay, who commanded for the Prince of Orange, had despatched a strong force, with instructions to make him prisoner. From this time, until the day of his death, he allowed himself no repose. Imitating the example, and inheriting the enthusiasm of his great predecessor Montrose, he invoked the loyalty of the clans to assist him in the struggle for legitimacy,—and he did not appeal to them in vain. His name was a spell to rouse the ardent spirits of the mountaineers; and not the Great Marquis himself, in the height of his renown, was more sincerely welcomed and more fondly loved than ‘Ian dhu nan Cath,’—dark John of the Battles,—the name by which Lord Dundee is still remembered in Highland song. In the mean time the Convention, terrified at their danger,

¹ had not in 1849¹, 1849² ² frantic] fanatic 1849¹, 1849², 1853

³ Dudhope] Duddope 1849¹, 1849², 1853

and dreading a Highland inroad, had despatched Mackay, a military officer of great experience, with a considerable body of troops, to quell the threatened insurrection. He was encountered by Dundee, and compelled to evacuate the high country and fall back upon the Lowlands, where he subsequently received reinforcements, and again marched northward. The Highland host was assembled at Blair, though not in great force, when the news of Mackay's advance arrived; and a council of the chiefs and officers was summoned, to determine whether it would be most advisable to fall back upon the glens and wild fastnesses of the Highlands, or to meet the enemy at once, though with a far inferior force.¹

Most of the old officers, who had been trained in the foreign wars, were of the former opinion—"alleging that it was neither prudent nor cautious to risk an engagement against an army of disciplined men, that exceeded theirs in number by more than a half." But both Glengarry and Lochell, to the great satisfaction of the General, maintained the contrary view, and argued that neither hunger nor fatigue were so likely to depress the Highlanders as a retreat when the enemy was in view. The account of the discussion is so interesting, and so characteristic of Dundee, that I shall take leave to quote its termination in the words of Drummond of Balhaldy:—

'An advice so hardy and resolute could not miss to please the generous Dundee. His looks seemed to heighten with an air of delight and satisfaction all the while Lochell was speaking. He told his council that they had heard his sentiments from the mouth of a person who had formed his judgment upon infallible proofs drawn from a long experience, and an intimate acquaintance with the persons and subject he spoke of. Not one in the company offering to contradict their general, it was unanimously agreed to fight.

'When the news of this vigorous resolution spread through the army, nothing was heard but acclamations of joy, which exceedingly pleased their gallant general; but before the council broke up, Lochell begged to be heard for a few words. "My Lord," said he, "I have just now declared, in presence of this honourable company, that I was resolved to give an implicit obedience to all your Lordship's commands; but I humbly beg leave, in name of these gentlemen, to give the word of command for this one time. It is the voice of your council, and their orders are that you do not engage personally. Your Lordship's business is to have an eye on all parts, and to issue out your commands as you shall think proper; it is ours to execute them with promptitude and courage. On your Lordship depends the fate, not only of

¹ far inferior force] force far inferior to his 1849 ¹

42 LAYS OF THE SCOTTISH CAVALIERS

this little brave army, but also of our king and country. If your Lordship deny us this reasonable demand, for my own part I declare, that neither I, nor any I am concerned in, shall draw a sword on this important occasion, whatever construction shall be put upon the matter."

'Locheill was seconded in this by the whole council; but Dundee begged leave to be heard in his turn. "Gentlemen," said he, "as I am absolutely convinced, and have had repeated proofs, of your zeal for the King's service, and of your affection to me as his general and your friend, so I am fully sensible that my engaging personally this day may be of some loss if I shall chance to be killed. But I beg leave of you, however, to allow me to give one *shear darg* (that is, one harvest-day's work) to the King, my master, that I may have an opportunity of convincing the brave clans that I can hazard my life in that service as freely as the meanest of them. Ye know their temper, gentlemen; and if they do not think I have personal courage enough, they will not esteem me hereafter, nor obey my commands with cheerfulness. Allow me this single favour, and I here promise, upon my honour, never again to risk my person while I have that of commanding you."

'The council, finding him inflexible, broke up, and the army marched directly towards the Pass of Killiecrankie.'

Those who have visited that romantic spot need not be reminded of its peculiar features, for these, once seen, must dwell for ever in the memory. The lower part of the Pass is a stupendous mountain-chasm, scooped out by the waters of the Garry, which here descend in a succession of roaring cataracts and pools. The old road, which ran almost parallel to the river and close upon its edge, was extremely narrow, and wound its way beneath a wall of enormous crags, surmounted by a natural forest of birch, oak, and pine. An army cooped up in that gloomy ravine would have as little chance of escape from the onset of an enterprising partisan corps, as had the Bavarian troops when attacked by the Tyrolese in the steep defiles of the Inn. General Mackay, however, had made his arrangements with consummate tact and skill, and had calculated his time so well, that he was enabled to clear the Pass before the Highlanders could reach it from the other side. Advancing upwards, the passage becomes gradually broader, until, just below the House of Urrard, there is a considerable width of meadow-land. It was here that Mackay took up his position, and arrayed his troops, on observing that the heights above were occupied by the army of Dundee.

The forces of the latter scarcely amounted to one-third of those of his antagonist, which were drawn up in line without any reserve. He was therefore compelled, in making his dispositions, to leave considerable gaps in his own line,

which gave Mackay a further advantage. The right of Dundee's army was formed of the M'Lean, Glengarry, and Clanranald regiments, along with some Irish levies. In the centre was Dundee himself, at the head of a small and ill-equipped body of cavalry, composed of Lowland gentlemen and their followers, and about forty of his old troopers. The Camerons and Skyemen, under the command of Lochell and Sir Donald Macdonald of Sleat, were stationed on the left. During the time occupied by these dispositions, a brisk cannonade was opened by Mackay's artillery, which materially increased the impatience of the Highlanders to come to close quarters. At last the word was given to advance, and the whole line rushed forward with the terrific impetuosity peculiar to a charge of the clans. They received the fire of the regular troops without flinching, reserved their own until they were close at hand, poured in a murderous volley, and then, throwing away their firelocks, attacked the enemy with the broadsword.

The victory was almost instantaneous, but it was bought at a terrible price. Through some mistake or misunderstanding, a portion of the cavalry, instead of following their general, who had charged directly for the guns, executed a manœuvre which threw them into disorder; and when last seen in the battle, Dundee, accompanied only by the Earl of Dunfermline and about sixteen gentlemen, was entering into the cloud of smoke, standing up in his stirrups, and waving to the others to come on. It was in this attitude that he appears to have received his death-wound. On returning from the pursuit, the Highlanders found him dying on the field.

It would be difficult to point out another instance in which the maintenance of a great cause depended solely upon the life of a single man. Whilst Dundee survived, Scotland at least was not lost to the Stuarts, for, shortly before the battle, he had received assurance that the greater part of the organised troops in the north were devoted to his person, and ready to join him; and the victory of Killiecrankie would have been followed by a general rising of the loyal gentlemen in the Lowlands. But with his fall the enterprise was over.

I hope I shall not be accused of exaggerating the importance of this battle, which, according to the writer I have already quoted, was best proved by the consternation into which the opposite party were thrown at the first news of Mackay's defeat. 'The Duke of Hamilton, commissioner for the parliament which then sat at Edinburgh, and the rest of the ministry, were struck with such a panic, that some of them were for retiring into England, others into the western shires of Scotland, where all the people, almost to a man, befriended them; nor knew they whether to abandon the government, or to stay a few days until they

saw what use my Lord Dundee would make of his victory. They knew the rapidity of his motions, and were convinced that he would allow them no time to deliberate. On this account it was debated, whether such of the nobility and gentry as were confined for adhering to their old master, should be immediately set at liberty or more closely shut up; and though the last was determined on, yet the greatest revolutionists among them made private and frequent visits to these prisoners, excusing what was past, from a fatal necessity of the times, which obliged them to give a seeming compliance, but protesting that they always wished well to King James, as they should soon have occasion to show when my Lord Dundee advanced.'

'The next morning after the battle,' says Drummond, 'the Highland army had more the air of the shattered remains of broken troops than of conquerors; for here it was literally true that

The vanquished triumphed, and the victors mourned.

The death of their brave general, and the loss of so many of their friends, were inexhaustible fountains of grief and sorrow. They closed the last scene of this mournful tragedy in obsequies of their lamented general, and of the other gentlemen who fell with him, and interred them in the church of Blair of Atholl with a real funeral solemnity, there not being present one single person who did not participate in the general affliction.'

I close this notice of a great soldier and devoted loyalist, by transcribing the beautiful epitaph composed by Dr. Pitcairn:

Ultime Scotorum, potuit quo sospite solo
 Libertas patriae salva fuisse tuæ:
 Te moriente, novos accepit Scotia cives,
 Accepitque novos, te moriente, deos.
 Illa tibi superesse negat¹: tu non potes² illi:
 Ergo Caledoniae nomen inane vale:
 Tuque vale, gentis priscae fortissime ductor,
 Optime Scotorum atque³ ultime—Grame, vale!

¹ tibi . . . negat 1807] nequit . . . tibi *earlier editions* ² potes 1849¹, 1867] potis 1849², 1853, 1863 ³ Optime . . . atque 1867] Ultime . . . ac *earlier editions*

[The 1867 version of this epigram (although subsequent to the date of Aytoun's death) is given here because its fifth line agrees with the version in *Selecta Poemata Archibaldi Pitcairni*, 1727 and with Scott's quotation of it in his edition of Dryden, 1808 (vol. xi, p. 114). The last line, however, both in 1727 and 1808 reads:

Ultime Scotorum, atque ultime Grame, vale!

Scott, annotating Dryden's translation (*q.v.* Oxford Dryden, p. 181) writes: 'Some editions of this celebrated epitaph, which seem to have been followed by Dryden, read the last line thus:

'Ultime Scotorum atque optime, Grame, Vale!']

THE BURIAL-MARCH OF DUNDEE

[*Blackwood's Magazine*, April 1843¹]

I

SOUND the fife, and cry the slogan—
 Let the pibroch shake the air
 With its wild triumphal music,
 Worthy of the freight we bear.
 Let the ancient hills of Scotland
 Hear once more the battle-song
 Swell within their glens and valleys
 As the clansmen march along!
 Never from the field of combat,
 Never from the deadly fray,
 Was a nobler trophy carried 10
 Than we bring with us to-day—
 Never, since the valiant Douglas
 On his dauntless bosom bore
 Good King Robert's heart—the priceless—
 To our dear Redeemer's shore!
 Lo! we bring with us the hero—
 Lo! we bring the conquering Græme,
 Crowned as best beseems a victor 20
 From the altar of his fame;
 Fresh and bleeding from the battle
 Whence his spirit took its flight.
 Midst the crashing charge of squadrons,
 And the thunder of the fight!
 Strike, I say, the notes of triumph,
 As we march o'er moor and lea!
 Is there any here will venture
 To bewail our dead Dundee?
 Let the widows of the traitors
 Weep until their eyes are dim! 30
 Wail ye may full well for Scotland—
 Let none dare to mourn for him!
 See! above his glorious body
 Lies the royal banner's fold—
 See! his valiant blood is mingled—
 With its crimson and its gold—
 See how calm he looks, and stately,
 Like a warrior on his shield,
 Waiting till the flush of morning
 Breaks along the battle-field! 40

¹ The prose preface did not appear in '*Blackwood*'

1 cry] raise '*Blackwood*' 14 On] in '*Blackwood*' (where the
 poem was printed in long lines) 81 full well] indeed
 '*Blackwood*' 40 along] upon '*Blackwood*'

See—Oh never more, my comrades,
 Shall we see that falcon eye
 Redden with its inward lightning,
 As the hour of fight drew nigh!
 Never shall we hear the voice that,
 Clearer than the trumpet's call,
 Bade us strike for King and Country,
 Bade us win the field, or fall!

II

On the heights of Killiecrankie
 Yester-morn our army lay : 50
 Slowly rose the mist in columns
 From the river's broken way ;
 Hoarsely roared the swollen torrent,
 And the Pass was wrapt in gloom,
 When the clansmen rose together
 From their lair amidst the broom.
 Then we belted on our tartans,
 And our bonnets down we drew,
 And we felt our broadswords' edges,
 And we proved them to be true ; 60
 And we prayed the prayer of soldiers,
 And we cried the gathering-cry,
 And we clasped the hands of kinsmen,
 And we swore to do or die !
 Then our leader rode before us
 On his war-horse black as night—
 Well the Cameronian rebels
 Knew that charger in the fight !—
 And a cry of exultation
 From the bearded warriors rose ; 70
 For we loved the house of Claver'se,
 And we thought of good Montrose.
 But he raised his hand for silence—
 'Soldiers! I have sworn a vow :
 Ere the evening star shall glisten
 On Schehallion's lofty brow,
 Either we shall rest in triumph,
 Or another of the Grames
 Shall have died in battle-harness
 For his Country and King James ! 80
 Think upon the Royal Martyr—
 Think of what his race endure—
 Think of him whom butchers murdered
 On the field of Magus Muir :—

43] Redden] Kindle 'Blackwood' II] This division is
 not made in 'Blackwood', nor numbered in 1849¹ 56 amidst]
 among 'Blackwood' 83 of] on 'Blackwood', 1849¹, 1849², 1853

By his sacred blood I charge ye,
 By the ruined hearth and shrine—
 By the blighted hopes of Scotland,
 By your injuries and mine—
 Strike this day as if the anvil
 Lay beneath your blows the while, 90
 Be they covenanting traitors,
 Or the brood of false Argyle!
 Strike! and drive the trembling rebels
 Backwards o'er the stormy Forth;
 Let them tell their pale Convention
 How they fared within the North.
 Let them tell that Highland honour
 Is not to be bought nor sold,
 That we scorn their prince's anger
 As we loathe his foreign gold. 100
 Strike! and when the fight is over,
 If ye look in vain for me,
 Where the dead are lying thickest,
 Search for him that was Dundee!

III

Loudly then the hills re-echoed
 With our answer to his call,
 But a deeper echo sounded
 In the bosoms of us all.
 For the lands of wide Breadalbane,
 Not a man who heard him speak 110
 Would that day have left the battle.
 Burning eye and flushing cheek
 Told the clansmen's fierce emotion,
 And they harder drew their breath;
 For their souls were strong within them,
 Stronger than the grasp of death.
 Soon we heard a challenge-trumpet
 Sounding in the Pass below,
 And the distant tramp of horses,
 And the voices of the foe: 120
 Down we crouched amid the bracken,
 Till the Lowland ranks drew near,
 Panting like the hounds in summer,
 When they scent the stately deer.
 From the dark defile emerging.
 Next we saw the squadrons come,
 Leslie's foot and Leven's troopers
 Marching to the tuck of drum;

104 that] who 'Blackwood' iii] This and the succeeding
 divisions are not numbered in 'Blackwood' or 1849¹

Through the scattered wood of birches,
 O'er the broken ground and heath, 130
 Wound the long battalion slowly,
 Till they gained the plain beneath;
 Then we bounded from our covert.—
 Judge how looked the Saxons then,
 When they saw the rugged mountain
 Start to life with armed men!
 Like a tempest down the ridges
 Swept the hurricane of steel,
 Rose the slogan of Macdonald—
 Flashed the broadsword of Lochell! 140
 Vainly sped the withering volley
 'Mongst the foremost of our band—
 On we poured until we met them,
 Foot to foot, and hand to hand,
 Horse and man went down like drift-wood
 When the floods are black at Yule,
 And their carcasses are whirling
 In the Garry's deepest pool.
 Horse and man went down before us—
 Living foe there tarried none 150
 On the field of Killiecrankie,
 When that stubborn fight was done!

IV

And the evening star was shining
 On Schehallion's distant head,
 When we wiped our bloody broadswords,
 And returned to count the dead.
 There we found him gashed and gory
 Stretched upon the cumbered plain,
 As he told us where to seek him,
 In the thickest of the slain. 160
 And a smile was on his visage,
 For within his dying ear
 Pealed the joyful note of triumph,
 And the clansmen's clamorous cheer:
 So, amidst the battle's thunder,
 Shot, and steel, and scorching flame,
 In the glory of his manhood
 Passed the spirit of the Grème!

V

Open wide the vaults of Atholl,
 Where the bones of heroes rest— 170
 Open wide the hallowed portals
 To receive another guest!

132 plain] field 'Blackwood', 1849¹, 1849² 140 Lochell]
 Lochiel 'Blackwood' 169 Atholl] Athol 'Blackwood', 1849¹,
 1849², 1853

Last of Scots, and last of freemen—
 Last of all that dauntless race,
 Who would rather die unsullied
 Than outlive the land's disgrace!
 O thou lion-hearted warrior!
 Reck not of the after-time:
 Honour may be deemed dishonour,
 Loyalty be called a crime. 180
 Sleep in peace with kindred ashes
 Of the noble and the true,
 Hands that never failed their country,
 Hearts that never baseness knew.
 Sleep!—and till the latest trumpet
 Wakes the dead from earth and sea,
 Scotland shall not boast a braver
 Chieftain than our own Dundee!

THE WIDOW OF GLENCOE

[*Blackwood's Magazine*, December 1847]

THE Massacre of Glencoe is an event which neither can nor ought to be forgotten. It was a deed of the worst treason and cruelty—a barbarous infraction of all laws, human and divine; and it exhibits in their foulest peridy the true characters of the authors and abettors of the Revolution.²

After the battle of Killiecrankie the cause of the Scottish royalists declined, rather from the want of a competent leader than from any disinclination on the part of a large section of the nobility and gentry³ to vindicate the right of King James. No person of adequate talents or authority was found to supply the place of the great and gallant Lord Dundee: for⁴ General Cannon, who succeeded in command, was not only deficient in military skill, but did not possess the confidence, nor understand the character of the Highland chiefs, who, with their clansmen, constituted by far the most important section of the army. Accordingly no enterprise of any importance was attempted; and the disastrous issue of the battle of the Boyne led to a negotiation which terminated in the entire disbanding of the royal forces. By

¹ a deed . . . and it] one of the earliest fruits of the so-called glorious Revolution Settlement, and '*Blackwood*'
 authors . . . Revolution] its authors '*Blackwood*'² the
 . . . gentry] the people '*Blackwood*'³ a large
 of whom it was truly written,—⁴ Dundee: for] Dundee,

Te moriente, novos accepit Scotia cives,
 Accipitque novos, te moriente, deos. '*Blackwood*'

this treaty, which was expressly sanctioned by William of Orange, a full and unreserved indemnity and pardon was granted to all of the Highlanders who had taken arms, with a proviso that they should first subscribe the oath of allegiance to William and Mary, before the 1st of January 1692, in presence of the Lords of the Scottish Council, 'or of the sheriffs or their deputies of the respective shires wherein they lived.' The letter of William addressed to the Privy Council, and ordering proclamation to be made to the above effect, contained also the following significant passage:— 'That ye communicate our pleasure to the Governor of Inverlochy, and other commanders, that they be exact and diligent in their several posts; but that they show no more zeal against the Highlanders after their submission, *than they have ever done formerly when these were in open rebellion.*'

This enigmatical sentence, which in reality was intended, as the sequel will show, to be interpreted in the most cruel manner, appears to have caused some perplexity in the Council, as that body deemed it necessary to apply for more distinct and specific instructions, which, however, were not then issued. It had been especially stipulated by the chiefs, as an indispensable preliminary to their treaty, that they should have leave to communicate with King James, then residing at St Germain's, for the purpose of obtaining his permission and warrant previous to submitting themselves to the existing government. That article had been sanctioned by William before the proclamation was issued, and a special messenger was despatched to France for that purpose.

In the mean time, troops were gradually and cautiously advanced to the confines of the Highlands, and, in some instances, actually quartered on the inhabitants. The condition of the country was perfectly tranquil. No disturbances whatever occurred in the north or west of Scotland; Lochell and the other chiefs were awaiting the communication from St Germain's, and held themselves bound in honour to remain inactive; whilst the remainder of the royalist forces (for whom separate terms had been made) were left unmolested at Dunkeld.

But rumours, which are too clearly traceable to the emissaries of the new Government, asserting the preparation made for an immediate landing of King James at the head of a large body of the French, were industriously circulated, and by many were implicitly believed. The infamous policy which dictated such a course is now apparent. The term of the amnesty or truce granted by the proclamation expired with the year 1691, and all who had not taken the oath of allegiance before that term were to be proceeded against with the utmost severity. The proclamation was issued upon the 29th of August: consequently, only four months were allowed for the complete submission of the Highlands.

Not one of the chiefs subscribed until the mandate from King James arrived. That document, which is dated from St Germain's on the 12th of December 1691, reached Dunkeld eleven days afterwards, and, consequently, but a very short time before the indemnity expired. The bearer, Major Menzies, was so fatigued that he could proceed no farther on his journey, but forwarded the mandate by an express to the commander of the royal forces, who was then at Glengarry. It was therefore impossible that the document could be circulated through the Highlands within the prescribed period. Lochell, says Drummond of Balhaldy, did not receive his copy till about thirty hours before the time was out, and appeared before the sheriff at Inverara, where he took the oaths upon the very day on which the indemnity expired.

That a general massacre throughout the Highlands was contemplated by the Whig Government is a fact established by overwhelming evidence. In the course of the subsequent investigation¹ before the Scots Parliament, letters were produced from Sir John Dalrymple, then Master of Stair, one of the secretaries of state in attendance upon the Court, which too clearly indicate the intentions of William. In one of these, dated 1st December 1691²—*a month*, be it observed, before the amnesty expired—and addressed to Lieutenant-Colonel Hamilton, there are the following words:—‘The winter is the only season in which we are sure the Highlanders cannot escape us, *nor carry their wives, bairns, and cattle to the mountains.*’ And in another letter, written only two days afterwards, he says, ‘It is the only time that they cannot escape you, for human constitution cannot endure to be long out of houses. *This is the proper season to maul them in the cold long nights.*’ And in January thereafter, he informed Sir Thomas Livingston that the design was ‘to destroy entirely the country of Lochaber, Lochell’s lands, Keppoch’s, Glengarry’s, Appin, and Glencoe. I assure you,’ he continues, ‘your power shall be full enough, *and I hope the soldiers will not trouble the Government with prisoners.*’

Lochell was more fortunate than others of his friends and neighbours. According to Drummond,—‘Major Menzies, who, upon his arrival, had observed the whole forces of the kingdom ready to invade the Highlands, as he wrote to General Buchan, foreseeing the unhappy consequences, not only begged that general to send expresses to all parts with orders immediately to submit, but also wrote to Sir Thomas Livingston, praying him to supplicate the Council for a prorogation of the time, in regard that he was so excessively

¹ investigation] investigations ‘*Blackwood*’ ² 1691 ‘*Blackwood*’, 1867] 1694 a mistake in 1849¹, 1849², 1853, 1863

fatigued, that he was obliged to stop some days to repose a little; and that though he should send expresses, yet it was impossible they could reach the distant parts in such time as to allow the several persons concerned the benefit of the indemnity within the space limited; besides, that some persons having put the Highlanders in a bad temper, he was confident to persuade them to submit, if a further time were allowed. Sir Thomas presented this letter to the Council on the 5th of January 1692, but they refused to give any answer, and ordered him to transmit the same to Court.'

The reply of William of Orange was a letter, countersigned by Dalrymple, in which, upon the recital that 'several of the chieftains and many of their clans have not taken the benefit of our gracious indemnity,' he gave orders for a general massacre. 'To that end, we have given Sir Thomas Livingston orders to employ our troops (which we have already conveniently posted) to cut off these obstinate rebels *by all manner of hostility*; and we do require you to give him your assistance and concurrence in all other things that may conduce to that service; and because these rebels, to avoid our forces, may draw themselves, *their families*, goods, or cattle, to lurk or be concealed among their neighbours: therefore we require and authorise you to emit a proclamation, to be published at the market-crosses of these or the adjacent shires where the rebels reside, discharging upon the highest penalties the law allows, any reset, correspondence, or intercommuning with these rebels.' This monstrous mandate, which was in fact the death-warrant of many thousand innocent people, no distinction being made of age or sex, would, in all human probability, have been put into execution, but for the remonstrance of one high-minded nobleman. Lord Carmarthen, afterwards Duke of Leeds, accidentally became aware of the proposed massacre, and personally remonstrated with the monarch against a measure which he denounced as at once cruel and impolitic. After much discussion, William, influenced rather by an apprehension that so savage and sweeping an act might prove fatal to his new authority, than by any compunction or impulse of humanity, agreed to recall the general order, and to limit himself, in the first instance, to a single deed of butchery, by way of testing the temper of the nation. Some difficulty seems to have arisen in the selection of the fittest victim. Both Keppoch and Glencoe were named, but the personal rancour of Secretary Dalrymple decided the doom of the latter. The secretary wrote thus:—'Argyle tells me that Glencoe hath not taken the oath, *at which I rejoice*¹. It is a great work of charity to be exact in rooting out that damnable set.' The final instructions regarding Glencoe, which were issued on 16th January 1692, are as follows:—

¹ *First italicized in 1853*

‘WILLIAM R.—As for M’Ian of Glencoe and that tribe, if they can be well distinguished from the rest of the Highlanders, it will be proper for public justice to extirpate that set of thieves.
W. R.’

This letter is remarkable as being signed and countersigned by William alone, contrary to the usual practice. The secretary was no doubt desirous to screen himself from after responsibility, and was besides¹ aware that the royal signature would insure a rigorous execution of the sentence.

Macdonald, or, as he was more commonly designed, M’Ian of Glencoe, was the head of a considerable sept or branch of the great Clan-Coila, and was lineally descended from the ancient Lords of the Isles, and from the royal family of Scotland—the common ancestor of the Macdonalds having espoused a daughter of Robert II. He was, according to a contemporary testimony, ‘a person of great integrity, honour, good nature, and courage; and his loyalty to his old master, King James, was such, that he continued in arms from Dundee’s first appearing in the Highlands, till the fatal treaty that brought on his ruin.’ In common with the other chiefs, he had omitted taking the benefit of the indemnity until he received the sanction of King James: but the copy of that document which was forwarded to him, unfortunately arrived too late. The weather was so excessively stormy at the time that there was no possibility of penetrating from Glencoe to Inverara, the place where the sheriff resided, before the expiry of the stated period; and M’Ian accordingly adopted the only practicable mode of signifying his submission, by making his way with great difficulty to Fort-William, then called Inverlochy, and tendering his signature to the military Governor there. That officer was not authorised to receive it, but, at the earnest entreaty of the chief, he gave him a certificate of his appearance and tender; and on New-Year’s day 1692, M’Ian reached Inverara, where he produced that paper as evidence of his intentions, and prevailed upon the sheriff, Sir James Campbell of Ardkinglass, to administer the oaths required. After that ceremony, which was immediately intimated to the Privy Council, had been performed, the unfortunate gentleman returned home, in the full conviction that he had thereby made peace with Government for himself and for his clan. But his doom was already sealed.

A company of the Earl of Argyle’s regiment had been previously quartered at Glencoe. These men, though Campbells, and hereditarily obnoxious to the Macdonalds, Camerons, and other of the loyal clans, were yet countrymen, and were kindly and hospitably received. Their captain, Robert Campbell of Glenlyon, was connected with the family

¹ besides] further ‘*Blackwood*’, 1849¹, 1849²

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of Glencoe through the marriage of a niece, and was resident under the roof of the chief. And yet this was the very troop selected for the horrid service.

Special instructions were sent to the major of the regiment, one Duncanson, then quartered at Ballachulish—a morose brutal, and savage man—who accordingly wrote to Campbell of Glenlyon in the following terms:—

‘BALLACHOLIS, 12 Feb. 1692.

SIR,—You are hereby ordered to fall upon the rebels, the M'Donalds of Glencoe, and putt all to the sword under seventy. You are to have special care that the old fox and his sons doe upon no account escape your hands. You are to secure all the avenues, that no man escape. This you are to put in execution att five o'clock in the morning precisely, and by that time, or very shortly after it, I'll strive to be att you with a stronger party. If I doe not come to you att five, you are not to tarry for me, but to fall on. This is by the king's speciall command, for the good and safety of the country, that these miscreants be cutt off root and branch. See that this be putt in execution without feud or favour, else you may expect to be treated as not true to the king's government, nor a man fitt to carry a commission in the king's service. Expecting you will not fail in the fulfilling hereof as you love yourself, I subscribe¹ these with my hand.

‘ROBERT DUNCANSON.

‘*For their Majesty's service.*

‘*To Captain Robert Campbell of Glenlyon.*’

This order was but too² literally obeyed. At the appointed hour, when the whole inhabitants of the glen were asleep, the work of murder began. M'Ian was one of the first who fell. Drummond's narrative fills up the remainder of the dreadful story.

‘They then served all within the family in the same manner, without distinction of age or person. In a word—for the horror of that execrable butchery must give pain to the reader—they left none alive but a young child, who, being frightened with the noise of the guns, and the dismal shrieks and cries of its dying parents, whom they were a-murdering, got hold of Captain Campbell's knees, and wrapt itself within his cloak; by which, chancing to move compassion, the captain inclined to have saved it, but one Drummond, an officer, arriving about the break of day with more troops, commanded it to be shot by a file of musqueteers. Nothing could be more shocking and horrible than the prospect of these houses bestrewed with mangled bodies of the dead, covered with blood, and resounding with the groans of wretches in the last agonies of life.

¹ subscribe] subscribe ‘*Blackwood*’
too ‘*Blackwood*’

² was but too] was.

'Two sons of Glencoe's were the only persons that escaped in that quarter of the country; for, growing jealous of some ill designs from the behaviour of the soldiers, they stole from their beds a few minutes before the tragedy began, and, chancing to overhear two of them discoursing plainly of the matter, they endeavoured to have advertised their father; but, finding that impracticable, they ran to the other end of the country and alarmed the inhabitants. There was another accident that contributed much to their safety; for the night was so excessively stormy and tempestuous, that four hundred soldiers, who were appointed to murder these people, were stopped in their march from Inverlochy, and could not get up till they had time to save themselves. To cover the deformity of so dreadful a sight, the soldiers burned all the houses to the ground, after having rifled them, carried away nine hundred cows, two hundred horses, numberless herds of sheep and goats, and everything else that belonged to these miserable people. Lamentable was the case of the women and children that escaped the butchery: the mountains were covered with a deep snow, the rivers impassable, storm and tempest filled the air, and added to the horrors and darkness of the night, and there were no houses to shelter them within many miles.'¹

Such was the awful massacre of Glencoe, an event which has left an indelible and execrable stain upon the memory of William of Orange. The records of Indian warfare can hardly afford a parallel instance of atrocity; and this deed, coupled with his deliberate treachery in the Darien scheme,² whereby Scotland was for a time absolutely ruined, is sufficient to account for the little estimation in which the name of the 'great Whig deliverer' is still regarded in the valleys of the North.

THE WIDOW OF GLENCOE

I

Do not lift him from the bracken,
 Leave him lying where he fell—
 Better bier ye cannot fashion:
 None beseems him half so well
 As the bare and broken heather,
 And the hard and trampled sod,
 Whence his angry soul ascended
 To the judgment-seat of God!

¹ *Memoirs of Sir Ewen Cameron of Locheill.* [Author's foot-note]

² scheme] business '*Blackwood*'

Winding-sheet we cannot give him—
 Seek no mantle for the dead, 10
 Save the cold and spotless covering
 Showered from heaven upon his head.
 Leave his broadsword as we found it,
 Bent and broken with the blow,
 Which, before he died, avenged him
 On the foremost of the foe.
 Leave the blood upon his bosom—
 Wash not off that sacred stain;
 Let it stiffen on the tartan,
 Let his wounds unclosed remain, 20
 Till the day when he shall show them
 At the throne of God on high,
 When the murderer and the murdered
 Meet before their Judge's eye!

II

Nay, ye should not weep, my children!
 Leave it to the faint and weak;
 Sobs are but a woman's weapon—
 Tears befit a maiden's cheek.
 Weep not, children of Macdonald!
 Weep not thou, his orphan heir— 30
 Not in shame, but stainless honour,
 Lies thy slaughtered father there.
 Weep not—but when years are over,
 And thine arm is strong and sure,
 And thy foot is swift and steady
 On the mountain and the muir—
 Let thy heart be hard as iron,
 And thy wrath as fierce as fire,
 Till the hour when vengeance cometh
 For the race that slew thy sire! 40
 Till in deep and dark Glenlyon
 Rise a louder shriek of woe,
 Than at midnight, from their eyrie,
 Scared the eagles of Glencoe:
 Louder than the screams that mingled
 With the howling of the blast,
 When the murderer's steel was clashing,
 And the fires were rising fast;
 When thy noble father bounded
 To the rescue of his men, 50
 And the slogan of our kindred
 Pealed throughout the startled glen!
 When the herd of frantic women
 Stumbled through the midnight snow,

With their fathers' houses blazing,
And their dearest dead below!
Oh, the horror of the tempest,
As the flashing drift was blown,
Crimsoned with the conflagration,
And the roofs went thundering down! 60
Oh, the prayers—the prayers and curses
That together winged their flight
From the maddened hearts of many
Through that long and woeful night!
Till the fires began to dwindle,
And the shots grew faint and few,
And we heard the foeman's challenge
Only in a far halloo:
Till the silence once more settled 70
O'er the gorges of the glen,
Broken only by the Cona
Plunging through its naked den.
Slowly from the mountain-summit
Was the drifting veil withdrawn,
And the ghastly valley glimmered
In the grey December dawn.
Better had the morning never
Dawned upon our dark despair!
Black amidst the common whiteness 80
Rose the spectral ruins there:
But the sight of these was nothing
More than wrings the wild-dove's breast,
When she searches for her offspring
Round the relics of her nest.
For in many a spot the tartan
Peered above the wintry heap,
Marking where a dead Macdonald
Lay within his frozen sleep.
Tremblingly we scooped the covering 90
From each kindred victim's head,
And the living lips were burning
On the cold ones of the dead.
And I left them with their dearest—
Dearest charge had every one—
Left the maiden with her lover,
Left the mother with her son.
I alone of all was mateless—
Far more wretched I than they,
For the snow would not discover 100
Where my lord and husband lay.
But I wandered up the valley,
Till I found him lying low,
With a gash upon his bosom
And the frown upon his brow—

Till I found him lying murdered,
Where he wooed me long ago!

III

Woman's weakness shall not shame me—
Why should I have tears to shed?
Could I rain them down like water,
O my hero! on thy head— 110
Could the cry of lamentation,
Wake thee from thy silent sleep,
Could it set thy heart a-throbbing,
It were mine to wail and weep!
But I will not waste my sorrow,
Lest the Campbell women say
That the daughters of Clanranald
Are as weak and frail as they.
I had wept thee hadst thou fallen,
Like our fathers, on thy shield, 120
When a host of English foemen
Camped upon a Scottish field—
I had mourned thee, hadst thou perished
With the foremost of his name,
When the valiant and the noble
Died around the dauntless Græme!
But I will not wrong thee, husband!
With my unavailing cries,
Whilst thy cold and mangled body
Stricken by the traitor lies; 130
Whilst he counts the gold and glory
That this hideous night has won,
And his heart is big with triumph
At the murder he has done.
Other eyes than mine shall glisten,
Other hearts be rent in twain,
Ere the heathbells on thy hillock
Wither in the autumn rain.
Then I'll seek thee where thou sleepest,
And I'll veil my weary head, 140
Praying for a place beside thee,
Dearer than my bridal bed:
And I'll give thee tears, my husband!
If the tears remain to me,
When the widows of the foemen
Cry the coronach for thee!

THE ISLAND OF THE SCOTS

In consequence of a capitulation with Government, the regular troops who had served under Lord Dundee were conveyed¹ to France; and, immediately upon their landing, the officers and others had their rank confirmed according to the tenor of the commissions and characters which they bore in Scotland. They were distributed throughout the different garrisons in the north of France, and, though nominally in the service of King James, derived their whole means of subsistence from the bounty of the French monarch. So long as it appeared probable that another descent was meditated, these² gentlemen, who were almost without exception men of considerable family, assented to this arrangement; but the destruction of the French fleet under Admiral Tourville, off La Hogue, led to a material change in their views. After that naval engagement it became obvious that the cause of the fugitive king was in the mean time desperate, and the Scottish officers, with no less gallantry than honour, volunteered a sacrifice which, so far as I know, has hardly been equalled.

The old and interesting pamphlet written by one of the corps,³ from which I have extracted most of the following details, but which is seldom perused except by the antiquary, states that—'The Scottish officers considering that, by the loss of the French fleet, King James's restoration would be retarded for some time, and that they were burdensome to the King of France, being entertained in garrisons on whole pay, without doing duty, when he had almost all Europe in confederacy against him; therefore humbly entreated King James to have them reduced into a company of private sentinels, and chose⁴ officers amongst themselves to command them; assuring his Majesty that they would serve in the meanest circumstances, and undergo the greatest hardships and fatigues, that reason could imagine or misfortunes inflict, until it pleased God to restore him. King James commended their generosity and loyalty, but disapproved of what they proposed, and told them it was impossible that gentlemen, who had served in so honourable posts as formerly they had enjoyed, and lived in so great plenty and ease, could ever undergo the fatigue and hardships of private sentinels' duty. Again, that his own first command was a company of officers, whereof several died; others, wearied with fatigue, drew their discharges; till at last it dwindled into nothing, and he got no reputation by the command; therefore he desired them to insist no more on that project.

¹ conveyed] transhipped 1849¹

² these] those 1849¹

³ *An account of Dundee's Officers, after they went to France.* By an Officer of the Army, London: 1714. [Author's foot-note]

⁴ chose] choose 1849¹, 1849²

60 LAYS OF THE SCOTTISH CAVALIERS

The officers (notwithstanding his Majesty's desire to the contrary) made several interests at court, and harassed him so much, that at last he condescended, and appointed those who were to command them.

Shortly afterwards, the new corps was reviewed for the first and last time by the unfortunate James in the gardens of St Germain's, and the tears are said to have gushed from his eyes at the sight of so many brave men, reduced, through their disinterested and persevering loyalty, to so very humble a condition. 'Gentlemen,' said he, 'my own misfortunes are not so nigh my heart as yours. It grieves me beyond what I can express, to see so many brave and worthy gentlemen, who had once the prospect of being the chief officers in my army, reduced to the stations of private sentinels. Nothing but your loyalty, and that of a few of my subjects in Britain, who are forced from their allegiance by the Prince of Orange, and who, I know, will be ready on all occasions to serve me and my distressed family, could make me willing to live. The sense of what all of you have done and undergone for your loyalty, hath made so deep an impression upon my heart, that, if it ever please God to restore me, it is impossible I can be forgetful of your services and sufferings. Neither can there be any posts in the armies of my dominions but what you have just pretensions to. As for my son, your Prince, he is of your own blood, a child capable of any impression, and, as his education will be from you, it is not supposable that he can forget your merits. At your own desires you are now going a long march far distant from me. Fear God and love one another. Write your wants particularly to me, and depend upon it always to find me your parent and King.' The scene bore a strong resemblance to one which many years afterwards occurred at Fontainebleau. The company listened to his words with deep emotion, gathered round him, as if half repentant of their own desire to go; and so parted, for ever on this earth, the dethroned monarch and his exiled subjects.

The number of this company of officers was about one hundred and twenty: their destination was Perpignan in Roussillon, close upon the frontier of Spain, where they were to join the army under the command of the Mareschal de Noailles. Their power of endurance, though often most severely tested in an unwholesome climate, seems to have been no less remarkable than their gallantry, which upon many occasions called forth the warm acknowledgment of the French commanders. '*Le gentilhomme*,' said one of the generals, in acknowledgment of their readiness at a peculiarly critical moment, '*est toujours gentilhomme, et se montre toujours tel dans besoin et dans le danger*'—a eulogy as applicable to them as it was in later days to La Tour d'Auvergne, styled the first grenadier of France. At Perpignan they were

joined by two other Scottish companies, and the three seem to have continued to serve together for several campaigns.

As a proof of the estimation in which they were held, I shall merely extract a short account of the taking of Rosas in Catalonia, before referring to the exploit which forms the subject of the following ballad. 'On the 27th of May, the company of officers, and other Scottish companies, were joined by two companies of Irish, to make up a battalion in order to mount the trenches; and the major part of the officers listed themselves in the company of grenadiers, under the command of the brave Major Rutherford, who, on his way to the trenches, in sight of Mareschal de Noailles and his court, marched with his company on the side of the trench, which exposed him to the fire of a bastion, where there were two culverins and several other guns planted; likewise to the fire of two curtains lined with small-shot. Colonel Brown, following with the battalion, was obliged, in honour, to march the same way Major Rutherford had done; the danger whereof the Mareschal immediately perceiving, ordered one of his aides-de-camp to command Rutherford to march under cover of the trench, which he did; and if he had but delayed six minutes, the grenadiers and battalion had been cut to pieces. Rutherford, with his grenadiers, marched to a trench near the town, and the battalion to a trench on the rear and flank of the grenadiers, who fired so incessantly on the besieged, that they thought (the breach¹ being practicable) they were going to make their attacks, immediately beat a chamade, and were willing to give up the town upon reasonable terms: but the Mareschal's demands were so exorbitant that the Governor could not agree to them. Then firing began on both sides to be very hot; and they in the town, seeing how the grenadiers lay, killed eight of them. When the Governor surrendered the town, he inquired of the Mareschal what countrymen these grenadiers were; and assured him it was on their account he delivered up the town, because they fired so hotly that he believed they were resolved to attack the breach. He answered, smiling, '*Ces sont mes enfans*'—They are my children. Again; 'They are the King of Great Britain's Scottish officers, who, to show their willingness to share of his miseries, have reduced themselves to the carrying of arms, and chosen to serve under my command.' The next day, when the Mareschal rode along the front of the camp, he halted at the company of the officers' piquet, and they all surrounded him. Then, with his hat in his hand, he thanked them for their good services in the trenches, and freely acknowledged it was their conduct and courage which compelled the Governor to give up the town; and assured them he would acquaint his master with the same, which he

¹ breach] trench 1849¹, 1849²

did; for when his son arrived with the news at Versailles, the King, having read the letter, immediately took coach to St Germain, and when he had shown King James the letter, he thanked him for the services his subjects had done in taking Rosas in Catalonia; who, with concern, replied, they were the stock of his British officers, and that he was sorry he could not make better provision for them.'

And a miserable provision it was! They were gradually compelled to part with every remnant of the property which they had secured from the ruins of their fortunes; so that when they arrived, after various adventures, at Scelestadt, in Alsace, they were literally without the common means of subsistence. Famine and the sword had by this time thinned their ranks, but had not diminished their spirit, as the following narrative of their last exploit will show:—

'In December 1697, General Stirk, who commanded for the Germans, appeared with 16,000 men on the other side of the Rhine, which obliged the Marquis de Sell to draw out all the garrisons in Alsace, who made up about 4,000 men; and he encamped on the other side of the Rhine, over against General Stirk, to prevent his passing the Rhine and carrying a bridge over into an island in the middle of it, which the French foresaw would be of great prejudice to them. For the enemy's guns, placed on that island, would extremely gall their camp, which they could not hinder for the deepness of the water, and their wanting of boats—for which the Marquis quickly sent; but arriving too late, the Germans had carried a bridge over into the island, where they had posted above five hundred men, who, by order of their engineers, intrenched themselves; which the company of officers perceiving, who always grasped after honour, and scorned all thoughts of danger, resolved to wade the river, and attack the Germans in the island; and for that effect, desired Captain John Foster, who then commanded them, to beg of the Marquis that they might have liberty to attack the Germans in the island; who told Captain Foster, when the boats came up, they should be the first that attacked. Foster courteously thanked the Marquis, and told him they would wade into the island, who shrunk up his shoulders, prayed God to bless them, and desired them to do what they pleased.' Whereupon the officers, with the other two Scottish companies, made themselves ready; and, having secured their arms round their necks, waded into the river hand-in-hand, 'according to the Highland fashion,' with the water as high as their breasts; and, having crossed the heavy stream, fell upon the Germans in their intrenchment. These were presently thrown into confusion, and retreated, breaking down their own bridges, whilst many of them were drowned. This movement, having been made in the dusk of the evening, partook of the character of a surprise; but it

appears to me a very remarkable one, as having been effected under such circumstances, in the dead of winter, and in the face of an enemy who possessed the advantages both of position and of numerical superiority. The author of the narrative adds:—‘When the Marquis de Sell heard the firing, and understood that the Germans were beat out of the island, he made the sign of the cross on his face and breast, and declared publicly, that it was the bravest action that ever he saw, and that his army had no honour by it. As soon as the boats came, the Marquis sent into the island to acquaint the officers that he would send them both troops and provisions, who thanked his Excellency, and desired he should be informed that they wanted no troops, and could not spare time to make use of provisions, and only desired spades, shovels, and pickaxes, wherewith they might intrrench themselves—which were immediately sent to them. The next morning, the Marquis came into the island, and kindly embraced every officer, and thanked them for the good service they had done his master, assuring them he would write a true account of their honour and bravery to the Court of France, which, at the reading his letters, immediately went to St Germain, and thanked King James for the services his subjects had done on the Rhine.’

The company kept possession of the island for nearly six weeks, notwithstanding repeated attempts on the part of the Germans to surprise and dislodge them; but all these having been defeated by the extreme watchfulness of the Scots, General Stirk at length drew off his army, and retreated. ‘In consequence of this action,’ says the Chronicler, ‘that island is called at present Isle d’Ecosse, and will in likelihood bear that name until the general conflagration.’

Two years afterwards, a treaty of peace was concluded; and this gallant company of soldiers, worthy of a better fate, was broken up and dispersed. At the time when the narrative, from which I have quoted so freely, was compiled, not more than sixteen of Dundee’s veterans were alive. The author concludes thus:—‘And thus was dissolved one of the best companies that ever marched under command! Gentlemen, who, in the midst of all their pressures and obscurity, never forgot they were gentlemen; and whom the sweets of a brave, a just, and honourable conscience rendered perhaps more happy under those sufferings than the most prosperous and triumphant in iniquity, since our minds stamp our happiness.’

Some years ago, while visiting the ancient Scottish convent at Ratisbon, my attention was drawn to the monumental inscriptions on the walls of the dormitory, many of which bear reference to gentlemen of family and distinction, whose political principles had involved them in the troubles of 1688, 1715, and 1745. Whether the cloister which now

holds their dust had afforded them a shelter in the latter¹ years of their misfortunes, I know not; but, for one that is so commemorated, hundreds of the exiles must have passed away in obscurity, buried in the field on which they fell, or carried from the damp vaults of the military hospital to the trench, without any token of remembrance, or any other wish beyond that which the minstrels have ascribed to one of the greatest of our olden heroes:—

Oh! bury me by the bracken bush,
Beneath the blooming brier;
Let never living mortal ken
That a kindly Scot lies here!

THE ISLAND OF THE SCOTS

I

THE Rhine is running deep and red,
The island lies before—
‘Now is there one of all the host
Will dare to venture o’er?
For not alone the river’s sweep
Might make a brave man quail:
The foe are on the further side,
Their shot comes fast as hail.
God help us, if the middle isle
We may not hope to win!
Now is there any of the host
Will dare to venture in?’

10

II

‘The ford is deep, the banks are steep,
The island-shore lies wide:
Nor man nor horse could stem its force,
Or reach the further side.
See there! amidst the willow-boughs
The serried bayonets gleam;
They’ve flung their bridge—they’ve won the isle;
The foe have crossed the stream!
Their volley flashes sharp and strong—
By all the Saints! I trow
There never yet was soldier born
Could force that passage now!’

20

III

So spoke the bold French Mareschal
With him who led the van,
Whilst rough and red before their view
The turbid river ran.

¹ latter] later 1849¹

THE ISLAND OF THE SCOTS

65

Nor bridge nor boat had they to cross
 The wild and swollen Rhine,
 And thundering on the other bank
 Far stretched the German line.
 Hard by there stood a swarthy man
 Was leaning on his sword,
 And a saddened smile lit up his face
 As he heard the Captain's word.
 'I've seen a wilder stream ere now
 Than that which rushes there;
 I've stemmed a heavier torrent yet
 And never thought to dare,
 If German steel be sharp and keen,
 Is ours not strong and true?
 There may be danger in the deed,
 But there is honour too.'

30

40

IV

The old lord in his saddle turned,
 And hastily he said—
 'Hath bold Duguesclin's fiery heart
 Awakened from the dead?
 Thou art the leader of the Scots—
 Now well and sure I know,
 That gentle blood in dangerous hour
 Ne'er yet ran cold nor slow,
 And I have seen ye in the fight
 Do all that mortal may:
 If honour is the boon ye seek,
 It may be won this day—
 The prize is in the middle isle,
 There lies the adventurous way.
 And armies twain are on the plain,
 The daring deed to see—
 Now ask thy gallant company
 If they will follow thee!'

50

60

V

Right gladsome looked the Captain then,
 And nothing did he say,
 But he turned him to his little band—
 Oh few, I ween, were they!
 The relics of the bravest force
 That ever fought in fray.
 No one of all that company
 But bore a gentle name,
 Not one whose fathers had not stood
 In Scotland's fields of fame.

70

58 adventurous] venturous 1849¹, 1849²

All they had marched with great Dundee
 To where he fought and fell,
 And in the deadly battle-strife
 Had venged their leader well;
 And they had bent the knee to earth
 When every eye was dim,
 As o'er their hero's buried corpse
 They sang the funeral hymn; 80
 And they had trod the Pass once more,
 And stooped on either side
 To pluck the heather from the spot
 Where he had dropped and died;
 And they had bound it next their hearts,
 And ta'en a last farewell
 Of Scottish earth and Scottish sky,
 Where Scotland's glory fell.
 Then went they forth to foreign lands
 Like bent and broken men, 90
 Who leave their dearest hope behind,
 And may not turn again.

VI

'The stream,' he said, 'is broad and deep,
 And stubborn is the foe—
 Yon island-strength is guarded well—
 Say, brothers, will ye go?
 From home and kin for many a year
 Our steps have wandered wide,
 And never may our bones be laid
 Our fathers' graves beside. 100
 No children have we to lament,
 No wives to wail our fall;
 The traitor's and the spoiler's hand
 Have reft our hearths of all.
 But we have hearts, and we have arms,
 As strong to will and dare
 As when our ancient banners flew
 Within the northern air.
 Come, brothers! let me name a spell
 Shall rouse your souls again, 110
 And send the old blood bounding free
 Through pulse, and heart, and vein.
 Call back the days of bygone years—
 Be young and strong once more;
 Think yonder stream, so stark and red,
 Is one we've crossed before.

Rise, hill and glen! rise, crag and wood!

Rise up on either hand—

Again upon the Garry's banks,

On Scottish soil we stand!

120

Again I see the tartans wave,

Again the trumpets ring;

Again I hear our leader's call—

"Upon them for the King!"

Stayed we behind that glorious day

For roaring flood or linn?

The soul of Græme is with us still—

Now, brothers! will ye in?"

VII

No stay—no pause. With one accord

They grasped each other's hand,

130

Then plunged into the angry flood,

That bold and dauntless band.

High flew the spray above their heads,

Yet onward still they bore,

Midst cheer, and shout, and answering yell,

And shot, and cannon-roar—

'Now, by the Holy Cross! I swear,

Since earth and sea began,

Was never such a daring deed

Essay'd by mortal man!"

140

VIII

Thick blew the smoke across the stream,

And faster flashed the flame:

The water plashed in hissing jets

As ball and bullet came.

Yet onwards pushed the Cavaliers

All stern and undismayed,

With thousand armed foes before,

And none behind to aid.

Once, as they neared the middle stream,

So strong the torrent swept.

150

That scarce that long and living wall

Their dangerous footing kept.

Then rose a warning cry behind,

A joyous shout before:

'The current's strong—the way is long—

They'll never reach the shore!

See, see! they stagger in the midst,

They waver in their line!

Fire on the madmen! break their ranks,

And whelm them in the Rhine!"

160

IX

Have you seen the tall trees swaying
 When the blast is sounding shrill,
 And the whirlwind reels in fury
 Down the gorges of the hill?
 How they toss their mighty branches.
 Struggling with the tempest's shock,
 How they keep their place of vantage,
 Cleaving firmly to the rock?
 Even so the Scottish warriors
 Held their own against the river; 170
 Though the water flashed around them.
 Not an eye was seen to quiver;
 Though the shot flew sharp and deadly,
 Not a man relaxed his hold:
 For their hearts were big and thrilling
 With the mighty thoughts of old.
 One word was spoke among them,
 And through the ranks it spread—
 'Remember our dead Claverhouse!' 180
 Was all the Captain said.
 Then, sternly bending forward,
 They wrestled on awhile,
 Until they cleared the heavy stream,
 Then rushed towards the isle.

X

The German heart is stout and true,
 The German arm is strong;
 The German foot goes seldom back
 Where armed foemen throng.
 But never had they faced in field 190
 So stern a charge before,
 And never had they felt the sweep
 Of Scotland's broad claymore.
 Not fiercer pours the avalanche
 Adown the steep incline,
 That rises o'er the parent-springs
 Of rough and rapid Rhine—
 Scarce swifter shoots the bolt from heaven
 Than came the Scottish band
 Right up against the guarded trench,
 And o'er it sword in hand. 200
 In vain their leaders forward press—
 They meet the deadly brand!

162 sounding] piping 1849¹, 1849² 176 Struggling] Striving
 1849¹, 1849² 182 wrestled] struggled 1849¹, 1849²

XI

O lonely island of the Rhine—
 Where seed was never sown,
 What harvest lay upon thy sands,
 By those strong reapers thrown?
 What saw the winter moon that night,
 As, struggling through the rain,
 She poured a wan and fitful light
 On marsh, and stream, and plain? 210
 A dreary spot with corpses strewn,
 And bayonets glistening round;
 A broken bridge, a stranded boat,
 A bare and battered mound;
 And one huge watch-fire's kindled pile,
 That sent its quivering glare
 To tell the leaders of the host
 The conquering Scots were there!

XII

And did they twine the laurel-wreath
 For those who fought so well? 220
 And did they honour those who lived,
 And weep for those who fell?
 What meed of thanks was given to them
 Let aged annals tell.
 Why should they bring the laurel-wreath—
 Why crown the cup with wine?
 It was not Frenchmen's blood that flowed
 So freely on the Rhine—
 A stranger band of beggared men
 Had done the venturous deed: 230
 The glory was to France alone,
 The danger was their meed.
 And what cared they for idle thanks
 From foreign prince and peer?
 What virtue had such honied words
 The exiled heart to cheer?
 What mattered it that men should vaunt
 And loud and fondly swear,
 That higher feat of chivalry
 Was never wrought elsewhere? 240
 They bore within their breasts the grief
 That fame can never heal—
 The deep, unutterable woe
 Which none save exiles feel.

xi] No break here in 1849¹ or 1849²
 225 bring] twine 1849¹, 1849²
 hearts 1849¹

xii] xi 1849¹, 1849²
 236 exiled heart] exiles'

70 LAYS OF THE SCOTTISH CAVALIERS

Their hearts were yearning for the land
 They ne'er might see again—
 For Scotland's high and heathered hills,
 For mountain, loch, and glen—
 For those who haply lay at rest
 Beyond the distant sea,
 Beneath the green and daisied turf
 Where they would gladly be !

250

XIII

Long years went by. The lonely isle
 In Rhine's impetuous flood
 Has ta'en another name from those
 Who bought it with their blood :
 And, though the legend does not live—
 For legends lightly die—
 The peasant, as he sees the stream
 In winter rolling by,
 And foaming o'er its channel-bed
 Between him and the spot
 Won by the warriors of the sword,
 Still calls that deep and dangerous ford
 The Passage of the Scot.

260

CHARLES EDWARD AT VERSAILLES

THOUGH the sceptre had departed from the House of Stuart, it was reserved for one of its last descendants to prove to the world, by his personal gallantry and noble spirit of enterprise, that he at least had not degenerated from his royal line of ancestors. The daring effort of Charles Edward to recover the crown of these kingdoms for his father, is to us the most remarkable incident of the last century. It was honourable alike to the Prince and to those who espoused his cause; and, even in a political point of view, the outbreak ought not to be deplored, since its failure put an end for ever to the dynastical struggle which, for more than half a century, had agitated the whole of Britain; since it established¹ the rule of law and of social order throughout the mountainous districts of Scotland, and blended Celt and Saxon into one prosperous and united people. It was better that the antiquated system of clanship should have expired in a blaze of glory, than gradually dwindled into contempt; better that the patriarchal rule should at once

XIII] XII 1849¹, 1849²

¹ Britain; since it established] Britain, established 1849¹

have been extinguished by the dire catastrophe of Culloden, than that it should have lingered on, the shadow of an old tradition. There is nothing now to prevent us from dwelling with pride and admiration on the matchless devotion displayed by the Highlanders, in 1745, in behalf of the heir of him whom they acknowledged as their lawful king. No feeling can arise to repress the interest and the sympathy which is excited by the perusal of the tale narrating the sufferings of the princely wanderer. That unbought loyalty and allegiance of the heart, which would not depart from its constancy until the tomb of the Vatican had closed upon the last of the Stuart line, has long since been transferred to the constitutional sovereign of these realms; and the enthusiastic welcome which has so often greeted the return of Queen Victoria to her Highland home, owes its origin to a deeper feeling than that dull respect which modern liberalism asserts to be the only tribute due to the first magistrate of the land.

The campaign of 1745 yields in romantic interest to none which is written in history. A young and inexperienced prince, whose person was utterly unknown to any of his adherents, landed on the west coast of Scotland, not at the head of a foreign force, not munimented with supplies and arms, but accompanied by a mere handful of followers, and ignorant of the language of the people amongst whom he was hazarding his person. His presence in Scotland had not been urged by the chiefs of the clans, most of whom were deeply averse to embarking in an enterprise which must involve them in a war with so powerful an antagonist as England, and which, if unsuccessful, could only terminate in the utter ruin of their fortunes. This was not a cause in which the whole of Scotland was concerned. Although it was well known that many leading families in the Lowlands entertained Jacobite opinions, and although a large proportion of the common people had not yet become reconciled to, or satisfied of the advantages of the Union, by which they considered themselves dishonoured and betrayed, it was hardly to be expected that, without some fair guarantee for success, the bulk of the Scottish nation would actively bestir themselves on the side of the exiled family. Besides this, even amongst the Highlanders there was not unanimity of opinion. The three northern clans of Sutherland, Mackay, and Monro, were known to be staunch supporters of the Government. It was doubtful what part might be taken in the struggle by those of Mackenzie and Ross. The chiefs of Skye, who could have brought a large force of armed men into the field, had declined participating in the attempt. The adhesion of Lord Lovat, upon which¹ the co-operation

¹ adhesion . . . which] assistance . . . whom 1849¹, 1849²

of the Frasers might depend, could not be calculated on with certainty; and nothing but hostility could be expected from the powerful sept of the Campbells. Under such circumstances, it is little wonder if Cameron of Locheill, the most sagacious of all the chieftains who favoured the Stuart cause, was struck with consternation and alarm at the news of the Prince's landing, or that he attempted to persuade him from undertaking an adventure so seemingly hopeless. Mr. Robert Chambers, in his admirable history of that period, does not in the least exaggerate the importance of the interview on the result of which the prosecution of the war depended. 'On arriving at Borrodale, Locheill had a private interview with the Prince, in which the probabilities of the enterprise were anxiously debated. Charles used every argument to excite the loyalty of Locheill, and the chief exerted all his eloquence to persuade the Prince to withdraw till a better opportunity. Charles represented the present as the best possible opportunity, seeing that the French general kept the British army completely engaged abroad, while at home there were no troops but one or two newly-raised regiments. He expressed his confidence that a small body of Highlanders would be sufficient to gain a victory over all the force that could now be brought against him; and he was equally sure that such an advantage was all that was required to make his friends at home declare in his favour, and cause those abroad to send him assistance. All he wanted was that the Highlanders would¹ begin the war. Locheill still resisted, entreating Charles to be more temperate, and consent to remain concealed where he was, till his friends should meet together and concert what was best to be done. Charles, whose mind was wound up to the utmost pitch of impatience, paid no regard to this proposal, but answered that he was determined to put all to the hazard. 'In a few days', said he, 'with the few friends I have, I will raise the royal standard, and proclaim to the people of Britain that Charles Stuart is come over to claim the crown of his ancestors—to win it, or to perish in the attempt! Locheill—who, my father has often told me, was our firmest friend—may stay at home, and learn from the newspapers the fate of his Prince!' 'No!' said Locheill, stung by so poignant a reproach, and hurried away by the enthusiasm of the moment; 'I will share the fate of my Prince, and so shall every man over whom nature or fortune has given me any power.' Such was the juncture upon which depended the civil war of 1745; for it is a point agreed, says Mr. Home, who narrates this conversation, that if Locheill had persisted in his refusal to take arms, no other chief would have joined the standard, and the spark of rebellion

¹ would] should 1849¹, 1849²

must have been instantly extinguished.' Not more than twelve hundred men were assembled in Glenfinnan on the day when the standard was unfurled by the Marquis of Tullibardine; and at the head of this mere handful of followers, Charles Edward commenced the stupendous enterprise of reconquering the dominions of his fathers.

With a force which, at the battle of Preston, did not double the above numbers, the Prince descended upon the Lowlands, having baffled the attempts of General Cope to intercept his march—occupied the city of Perth, and the town of Dundee, and finally, after a faint show of resistance on the part of the burghers, took possession of the ancient capital of Scotland, and once more established a court in the halls of Holyrood. His youth, his gallantry, and the grace and beauty of his person, added to a most winning and affable address, acquired for him the sympathy of many who, from political motives, abstained from becoming his adherents. Possibly certain feelings of nationality, which no deliberate views of civil or religious policy could altogether extirpate, led such men to regard, with a sensation akin to pride, the spectacle of a prince descended from the long line of Scottish kings, again occupying his ancestral seat, and restoring to their country, which had been utterly neglected by the new dynasty, a portion of its former state. No doubt a sense of pity for the probable fate of one so young and chivalrous was often present to their minds, for they had thorough confidence in the intrepidity of the regular troops, and in the capacity of their commander; and they never for a moment supposed that these could be successfully encountered by a raw levy of undisciplined Highlanders, ill armed and worse equipped, and without the support of any artillery.

The issue of the battle of Preston¹ struck Edinburgh with amazement. In point of numbers the two armies were nearly equal, but in everything else, save personal valour, the royal troops had the advantage. And yet, *in four minutes*—for the battle is said not to have lasted longer—the Highlanders having made only ¹ one terrific and impetuous charge—the rout of the regulars was general. The infantry was broken and cut to pieces; the dragoons, who behaved shamefully on the occasion, turned bridle and fled, without having once crossed swords with the enemy. Mr. Chambers thus terminates his account of the action: 'The general result of the battle of Preston may be stated as having been the total overthrow and almost entire destruction of the royal army. Most of the infantry, falling upon the park walls of Preston, were there huddled together without the power of resistance into a confused drove, and had either to surrender

¹ made only] only made 1849 ¹

or be¹ cut to pieces. Many, in vainly attempting to climb over the walls, fell an easy prey to the ruthless claymore. Nearly 400, it is said, were thus slain, 700 taken, while only about 170 in all succeeded in effecting their escape.

'The dragoons, with worse conduct, were much more fortunate. In falling back, they had the good luck to find outlets from their respective positions by the roads which ran along the various extremities of the park wall, and they thus got clear through the village with little slaughter; after which, as the Highlanders had no horse to pursue them, they were safe. Several officers, among whom were Fowkes and Lascelles, escaped to Cockenzie and along Seton Sands, in a direction contrary to the general flight.

'The unfortunate Cope had attempted, at the first break of Gardiner's dragoons, to stop and rally them, but was borne headlong, with the confused bands, through the narrow road to the south of the enclosures, notwithstanding all his efforts to the contrary. On getting beyond the village, where he was joined by the retreating bands of the other regiment, he made one anxious effort, with the Earls of Loudon and Home, to form and bring them back to charge the enemy, now disordered by the pursuit; but in vain. They fled on, ducking their heads along their horses' necks to escape the bullets which the pursuers occasionally sent after them. By using great exertions, and holding pistols to the heads of the troopers, Sir John and a few of his officers induced a small number of them to halt in a field near St. Clement's Wells, about two miles from the battle-ground. But, after a momentary delay, the accidental firing of a pistol renewed the panic, and they rode off once more in great disorder. Sir John Cope, with a portion of them, reached Channelkirk at an early hour in the forenoon, and there halted to breakfast, and to write a brief note to one of the state-officers, relating the fate of the day. He then resumed his flight, and reached Coldstream that night. Next morning he proceeded to Berwick, whose fortifications seemed competent to give the security he required. He everywhere brought the first tidings of his own defeat.'

This victory operated very much in favour of Prince Charles. It secured him, for a season, the undisputed possession of Scotland, and enabled numerous adherents from all parts of the country to raise such forces as they could command, and to repair to his banner. His popularity in Edinburgh daily increased, as the qualities of his person and mind became known; and such testimony as the following, with respect to his estimation by the fair sex and the devotion they exhibited in his cause, is not overcharged: 'His affability and great personal grace wrought him high favour with the

¹ or be] or to be 1849¹

ladies, who, as we learn from the letters of President Forbes, became generally so zealous in his cause as to have some serious effect in inducing their admirers to declare for the Prince. There was, we know for certain, a Miss Lumsden, who plainly told her lover, a young artist, named Robert Strange, that he might think no more of her unless he should immediately join Prince Charles, and thus actually prevailed upon him to take up arms. It may be added that he survived the enterprise, escaped with great difficulty, and married the lady. He was afterwards the best line-engraver of his time, and received the honour of knighthood from George III. White ribbons and breastknots became at this time conspicuous articles of female attire in private assemblies. The ladies also showed considerable zeal in contributing plate and other articles for the use of the Chevalier at the palace, and in raising pecuniary subsidies for him. Many a posset-dish and snuff-box, many a treasured necklace and repeater, many a jewel which had adorned its successive generations of family beauties, was at this time sold or laid in pledge, to raise a little money for the service of Prince Charlie.'

As to the motives and intended policy of this remarkable and unfortunate young man, it may be interesting to quote the terms of the proclamation which he issued on the 10th October 1745, before commencing his march into England. Let his history be impartially read—his character, as spoken to by those who knew him best, fairly noted—and I think there cannot be a doubt that, had he succeeded in his daring attempt, he would have been true to the letter of his word, and fulfilled a pledge which Britain never more required than at the period when that document was penned.

'Do not the pulpits and congregations of the clergy, as well as your weekly papers, ring with the dreadful threats of popery, slavery, tyranny, and arbitrary power, which are now ready to be imposed upon you by the formidable powers of France and Spain? Is not my royal father represented as a bloodthirsty tyrant, breathing out nothing but destruction to all who will not immediately embrace an odious religion? Or have I myself been better used? But listen only to the naked truth.

'I, with my own money, hired a small vessel. Ill-supplied with money, arms, or friends, I arrived in Scotland, attended by seven persons. I publish the King my father's declaration, and proclaim his title, with pardon on one hand, and in the other liberty of conscience, and the most solemn promises to grant whatever a free Parliament shall propose for the happiness of the people'. I have, I confess, the greatest reason to adore the goodness of Almighty God, who has in so remarkable a manner protected me and my small army

through the many dangers to which we were at first exposed, and who has led me in the way to victory, and to the capital of this ancient kingdom, amidst the acclamations of the King my father's subjects. Why, then, is so much pains taken to spirit up the minds of the people against this my undertaking?

'The reason is obvious; it is, lest the real sense of the nation's present sufferings should blot out the remembrance of past misfortunes, and of the outcries formerly raised against the royal family. Whatever miscarriages might have given occasion to them, they have been more than atoned for since; and the nation has now an opportunity of being secured against the like in future.

'That our family has suffered exile during these fifty-seven years, everybody knows. Has the nation, during that period of time, been the more happy and flourishing for it? Have you found reason to love and cherish your governors as the fathers of the people of Great Britain and Ireland? Has a family, upon whom a faction unlawfully bestowed the diadem of a rightful prince, retained a due sense of so great a trust and favour? Have you found more humanity and condescension in those who were not born to a crown, than in my royal forefathers? Have their ears been open to the cries of the people? Have they or do they consider only the interest of these nations? Have you reaped any other benefit from them than an immense load of debt? If I am answered in the affirmative, why has their government been so often railed at in all your public assemblies? Why has the nation been so long crying out in vain for redress against the abuse of Parliaments, upon account of their long duration, the multitude of placemen, which occasions their venality, the introduction of penal laws, and, in general, against the miserable situation of the kingdom at home and abroad? All these, and many more inconveniences, must now be removed, unless the people of Great Britain be already so far corrupted that they will not accept of freedom when offered to them, seeing the King, on his restoration, will refuse nothing that a free Parliament can ask for the security of the religion, laws, and liberty of his people.

'It is now time to conclude; and I shall do it with this reflection: Civil wars are ever attended with rancour and ill-will, which party-rage never fails to produce in the minds of those whom different interests, principles, or views, set in opposition to one another. I, therefore, earnestly require it of my friends to give as little loose as possible to such passions: this will prove the most effectual means to prevent the same in the enemies of my royal cause. And this my declaration will vindicate to all posterity the nobleness of my undertaking and the generosity of my intentions.'

There was much truth in the open charges preferred in

this declaration against the existing Government. The sovereigns of the house of Hanover had always shown a marked predilection for their Continental possessions, and had proportionally neglected the affairs of Britain. Under Walpole's administration, the imperial Parliament had degenerated from an independent assembly to a junta of placemen, and the most flagitious system of bribery was openly practised and avowed. It was not without reason that Charles contrasted the state of the nation then, with its position when under the rule of the legitimate family; and had there not been a strong, though, I think, unreasonable suspicion in the minds of many, that his success would be the prelude to a vigorous attack upon the established religions of the country, and that he would be inclined to follow out in this respect the fatal policy of his grandfather, Charles would in all probability have received a more active and general support than was accorded to him. But the¹ zeal with which the Episcopalian party in Scotland espoused his cause, naturally gave rise to the idea that the attempt of the Prince was of evil omen to Presbytery; and the settlement of the Church upon its present footing was yet so recent, that the sores of the old feud were still festering and green. The Established clergy, therefore, were, nearly to a man, opposed to his pretensions; and one minister of Edinburgh, at the time when the Highland host was in possession of the city, had the courage to conclude his prayer nearly in the following terms—'Bless the king; Thou knows what king I mean—may his crown long sit easy on his head. And as to this young man who has come among us to seek an earthly crown, we beseech Thee in mercy to take him to Thyself and give him a crown of glory!' At the same time it is very curious to observe, that the most violent sect of Presbyterians, who might be considered as the representatives of the extreme Cameronian principle, and who had early seceded from the Church, and bitterly opposed the union of the kingdoms, were not indisposed, on certain terms, to coalesce with the Jacobites. It is hardly possible to understand the motives which actuated these men, who appear to have regarded each successive Government as equally obnoxious. Some writers go the length of averring that, in 1688, a negotiation was opened by one section of the Covenanters with Lord Dundee, with the object of resistance to the usurpation of William of Orange, and that the project was frustrated only by the death of that heroic nobleman. Sir Walter Scott—a great authority—seems to have been convinced that such was the case; but in the absence of direct proof, I can hardly credit it. It is perfectly well known that a conspiracy was formed

¹ But the] The 1849¹, 1849²

by a certain section of the Cameronian party to assassinate Lords Dundee and Dunfermline whilst in attendance at the meeting of Estates; and although the recognition of William as King might not have been palatable to others who held the same opinions, it would be a strange thing if they had so suddenly resolved to assist Dundee in his efforts for the exiled family. But the political changes in Scotland, more especially the Union, seem to have inspired some of these men with a spirit of disaffection to the Government; for, according to Mr. Chambers, the most rigid sect of Presbyterians had, since the Revolution, expressed a strong desire to coalesce with the Jacobites, with the hope, in case the house of Stuart were restored, to obtain what they called a covenanted King. Of this sect one thousand had assembled in Dumfriesshire at the first intelligence of the insurrection, bearing arms and colours, and supposed to contemplate a junction with the Chevalier. But these religionists were now almost as violently distinct from the Established Church of Scotland as ever they had been from those of England and Rome, and had long ceased to play a prominent part in the national disputes. The Established clergy, and the greater part of their congregations, were averse to Charles, upon considerations perfectly moderate, at the same time not easy to be shaken.

On commencing his march into England, Charles found himself at the head of an army of between five thousand and six thousand men, which force was considered strong enough, with the augmentations it might receive on the way, to effect the occupation of London. Had the English Jacobites performed their part with the same zeal as the Scots, it is more than probable that the attempt would have been crowned with success. As it was, the Prince succeeded in reducing the strong fortified town of Carlisle, and in marching without opposition through the heart of England, as far as Derby, within one hundred miles of the metropolis. But here his better genius deserted him. Discord had crept into his councils; for some of the chiefs became seriously alarmed at finding that the gentry of England, so far from preparing¹ to join the expedition, preferred² remaining at home, inactive spectators of the contest. Except at Manchester, they had received few or no recruits. No tidings had reached them from Wales—a country supposed to be devoted to the cause of King James, whilst it was well known that a large force was already in arms to oppose the clans. Mr. Chambers gives us the following details:—‘At a council of war held on the morning of the 5th December, Lord George Murray and the other members gave it as their

¹ so far from preparing] were not prepared 1849¹, 1849²

² preferred] but preferred 1849¹, 1849²

unanimous opinion that the army ought to return to Scotland. Lord George pointed out that they were about to be environed by three armies, amounting collectively to about thirty thousand men, while their own forces were not above five thousand, if so many. Supposing an unsuccessful engagement with any of these armies, it could not be expected that one man would escape, for the militia would beset every road. The Prince, if not slain in the battle, must fall into the enemy's hands; the whole world would blame them as fools for running into such a risk. Charles answered, that he regarded not his own danger. He pressed, with all the force of argument, to go forward. He did not doubt, he said, that the justice of his cause would prevail. He was hopeful that there might be a defection in the enemy's army, and that many would declare for him. He was so very bent on putting all to the risk, that the Duke of Perth was for it, since his Royal Highness was. At last he proposed going to Wales instead of returning to Carlisle; but every other officer declared his opinion for a retreat. These are nearly the words of Lord George Murray. We are elsewhere told that the Prince condescended to use entreaties to induce his adherents to alter their resolution. "Rather than go back", he said, "I would wish to be twenty feet under ground!" His chagrin, when he found his councillors obdurate, was beyond all bounds. The council broke up, on the understanding that the retreat was to commence next morning; Lord George volunteering to take the place of honour in the rear, provided only that he should not be troubled with the baggage.

This resolution was received by the army with marks of unequivocal vexation. Retreat, in their estimation, was little less than overthrow; and it was most galling to find that, after all their labours, hazards, and toils, they were doomed to disappointment at the very moment when the prize seemed ready for their grasp. That the movement was an injudicious one is, I think, obvious. We are told, upon good authority, 'that the very boldness of the Prince's onward movement, especially taken into connection with the expected descent from France, had at length disposed the English Jacobites to come out; and many were just on the point of declaring themselves, and marching to join his army, when the retreat from Derby was determined on. A Mr. Barry arrived in Derby two days after the Prince left it, with a message from Sir Watkin William Wynne and Lord Barrymore, to assure him, in the names of many friends of the cause, that they were ready to join him in what manner he pleased, either in the capital, or every one to rise in his own country.¹ I have likewise been assured that

¹ country] county 1849¹, 1849²

many of the Welsh gentry had actually left their homes, and were on the way to join Charles, when intelligence of his retreat at once sent them all back peaceably, convinced that it was now too late to contribute their assistance. These men, from the power they had over their tenantry, could have added materially to his military force. In fact, from all that appears, we must conclude that the insurgents had a very considerable chance of success from an onward movement—also, no doubt, a chance of destruction, and yet not worse than what ultimately befell many of them; while a retreat broke in a moment the spell which their gallantry had conjured up, and gave the enemy a great advantage over them.

One victory more was accorded to Prince Charles, before his final overthrow. After successfully conducting his retreat to Scotland, occupying Glasgow, and strengthening his army by the accession of new recruits, he gave battle to the royal forces under General Hawley at Falkirk, and, as at Preston, drove them from the field. The parties were on this occasion fairly matched, there being about eight thousand men engaged on either side. The action was short; and, though not so decisive as the former one, gave great confidence to the insurgents. It has been thus picturesquely portrayed by the historian of the enterprise:—‘Some individuals, who beheld the battle from the steeple of Falkirk, used to describe its’ main events as occupying a surprisingly brief space of time. They first saw the English army enter the misty and storm-covered muir at the top of the hill; then saw the dull atmosphere thickened by a fast-rolling smoke, and heard the pealing sounds of the discharge; immediately after, they beheld the discomfited troops burst wildly from the cloud in which they had been involved, and rush in far-spread disorder over the face of the hill. From the commencement to² what they styled “the *break* of the battle”, there did not intervene more than ten minutes—so soon may an efficient body of men become, by one transient emotion of cowardice, a feeble and contemptible rabble.

‘The rout would have been total, but for the three out-flanking regiments. These not having been opposed by any of the clans, having a ravine in front, and deriving some support from a small body of dragoons, stood their ground under the command of General Huske and Brigadier Cholmondley. When the Highlanders went past in pursuit, they received a volley from this part of the English army, which brought them to a pause, and caused them to draw back to their former ground, their impression being that some ambuscade was intended. This saved the English army from destruction. A pause took place, during which the bulk of the English infantry got back to Falkirk. It was not until Lord George Murray brought up the second line of his wing

¹ its] these, its 1849¹, 1849²

² to] of

and the pickets, with some others on the other wing, that General Huske drew off his party, which he did in good order.'

The seat of war was now removed to the North. The month of April 1746 found Prince Charles in possession of Inverness with an army sorely dwindled in numbers, and in great want of necessaries and provisions. Many of the Highlanders had retired for the winter to their native glens, and had not yet rejoined the standard. The Duke of Cumberland, who now commanded the English army, with a reputation not diminished by the unfortunate issue of Fontenoy, was at the head of a large body of tried and disciplined troops, in the best condition, and supported by the powerful arm of artillery.

He effected the passage of the Spey, a large and rapid river which intersects the Highlands, without encountering any opposition, and on the 15th of the month had arrived at Nairn, about nine miles distant from the position occupied by his kinsman and opponent. His superiority in point of strength was so great that the boldest of the insurgent chiefs hesitated as to the policy of giving immediate battle; and nothing but the desire of covering Inverness prevented the council from recommending² a further retreat into the mountains, where they could not have been easily followed, and where they were certain to have met with reinforcements. As to the Prince, his confidence in the prowess of the Highlanders was so unbounded, that, even with such odds against him, he would not listen to a proposal for delay.

There yet remained, says Mr. Chambers, before playing the great stake of a pitched battle, one chance of success, by the irregular mode of warfare to which the army was accustomed; and Charles resolved to put it to trial. This was a night-attack upon the camp of the Duke of Cumberland. He rightly argued, that if his men could approach without being discovered, and make a simultaneous attack in more than one place, the royal forces, then probably either engaged in drinking their commander's health (the 15th happened to be the anniversary of the Duke's birthday, and was celebrated as such by his army), or sleeping off the effects of the debauch, must be completely surprised and cut to pieces, or at least effectually routed. The time appointed for setting out upon the march was eight in the evening, when daylight should have completely disappeared; and, in the mean time, great pains were taken to conceal the secret from the army.

This resolution was entered into at three in the afternoon, and orders were given to collect the men who had gone off in search of provisions. The officers dispersed themselves to Inverness and other places, and besought the stragglers to

¹ Not a new paragraph in 1849¹, 1849²
recommencing 1849¹

² recommending]

repair to the muir. But, under the influence of hunger, they told their commanders to shoot them if they pleased, rather than compel them to starve any longer. Charles had previously declared, with his characteristic fervour, that though only a thousand of his men should accompany him, he would lead them on to the attack; and he was not now intimidated when he saw twice that number ready to assist in the enterprise; though some of his officers would willingly have made this deficiency of troops an excuse for abandoning what they esteemed at best a hazardous expedition. Having given out for watchword the name of his father, he embraced Lord George Murray, who was to command the foremost column, and, putting himself at the head of that which followed, gave the order to march.

The attempt proved peculiarly unfortunate, and from the fatigue which it occasioned to the Highlanders, contributed in a great degree towards the disaster of the following day. The night chanced to be uncommonly dark, and as it was well known that Cumberland had stationed spies on the principal roads, it became necessary to select a devious route, in order to effect a surprise. The columns, proceeding over broken and irregular ground, soon became scattered and dislocated; no exertions of the officers could keep the men together, so that Lord George Murray at two o'clock found that he was still distant three miles from the hostile camp, and that there were no hopes of commencing the attack before the break of day, when they would be open to the observation of the enemy. Under these circumstances a retreat was commenced; and the scheme, which at one time seemed to hold out every probability of success, was abandoned.

'The Highlanders returned, fatigued and disconsolate, to their former position, about seven in the morning, when they immediately addressed themselves to sleep, or went away in search of provisions. So scarce was food at this critical juncture, that the Prince himself, on retiring to Culloden House, could obtain no better refreshment than a little bread and whisky. He felt the utmost anxiety regarding his men, among whom the pangs of hunger, upon bodies exhausted by fatigue, must have been working effects most unpromising to his success; and he gave orders, before seeking any repose, that the whole country should now be mercilessly ransacked for the means of refreshment. His orders were not without effect. Considerable supplies were procured, and subjected to the cook's art at Inverness; but the poor famished clansmen were destined never to taste these provisions, the hour of battle arriving before they were prepared.'

About eleven in the forenoon, the troops of Cumberland were observed upon the eastern extremity of the wide muir of Culloden, and preparations were instantly made for the

coming battle. The army had been strengthened that morning by the arrival of the Keppoch Macdonalds and a party of the Frasers; but, even with these reinforcements, the whole available force which the Prince could muster was about five thousand men, to oppose at fearful odds an enemy twice as numerous, and heavily supported by artillery. Fortune on this day seemed to have deserted the Prince altogether. In drawing out the line of battle, a most unlucky arrangement was made by O'Sullivan, who acted as adjutant, whereby the Macdonald regiments were removed from the right wing—the place which the great Clan Coila¹ has been privileged to hold in Scottish array ever since the auspicious battle of Bannockburn. To those who are not acquainted with the peculiar temper and spirit of the Highlanders, and their punctilio upon points of honour and precedence, the question of arrangement will naturally appear a matter of little importance. But it was not so felt by the Macdonalds, who considered their change of position as a positive degradation, and who further looked upon it as an evil omen to the success of the battle. The results of this mistake will be noticed² immediately.

Just before the commencement of the action, the weather, which had hitherto been fair and sunny, became overcast, and a heavy blast of rain and sleet beat directly in the faces of the Highlanders. The English artillery then began to play upon them, and, being admirably served, every discharge told with fearful effect upon the ranks. The chief object of either party at the battle of Culloden seems to have been to force its opponent to leave his position, and to commence the attack. Cumberland, finding that his artillery was doing such execution, had no occasion to move; and Charles appears to have committed a great error in abandoning a mode of warfare which was peculiarly suited for his troops, and which on two previous occasions had proved eminently successful. Had he at once ordered a general charge, and attempted to silence the guns, the issue of the day might have been otherwise; but his unfortunate star prevailed.

'It was not', says Mr. Chambers, 'till the cannonade had continued nearly half an hour, and the Highlanders had seen many of their kindred stretched upon the heath, that Charles at last gave way to the necessity of ordering a charge. The aide-de-camp intrusted to carry his message to the lieutenant-general—a youth of the name of Maclachlan—was killed by a cannon-ball before he reached the first line; but the general sentiment of the army, as reported to Lord George Murray, supplied the want, and that general took it upon him to order an attack without Charles's permission having been communicated.

¹ Coila] Colla 1849¹, 1849²

² noticed] explained 1849¹

'Lord George had scarcely determined upon ordering a general movement, when the Macintoshes, a brave and devoted clan, though not before engaged in action, unable any longer to brook the unavenged slaughter made by the cannon, broke from the centre of the line, and rushed forward through smoke and snow to mingle with the enemy. The Athole men, Camerons, Stuarts, Frasers, and Macleans, also went on; Lord George Murray heading them with that rash bravery befitting the commander of such forces. Thus, in the course of one or two minutes, the charge was general along the whole line, except at the left extremity, where the Macdonalds, dissatisfied with their position, hesitated to engage.

'The action and event of the onset were, throughout, quite as dreadful as the mental emotion which urged it. Notwithstanding that the three files of the front line of English poured forth their incessant fire of musketry—notwithstanding that the cannon, now loaded with grape-shot, swept the field as with a hail-storm—notwithstanding the flank fire of Wolfe's regiment—onward, onward went the headlong Highlanders, flinging themselves into, rather than rushing upon, the lines of the enemy, which, indeed, they did not see for smoke, till involved among the weapons. All that courage, all that despair could do, was done. It was a moment of dreadful and agonising suspense, but only a moment—for the whirlwind does not reap the forest with greater rapidity than the Highlanders cleared the line. Nevertheless almost every man in their front rank, chief and gentleman, fell before the deadly weapons which they had braved: and although the enemy gave way, it was not till every bayonet was bent and bloody with the strife.

'When the first line had thus been swept aside, the assailants continued their impetuous advance till they came near the second, when, being almost annihilated by a profuse and well-directed fire, the shattered remains of what had been before a numerous and confident force began to give way. Still a few rushed on, resolved rather to die than forfeit their well-acquired and dearly-estimated honour. They rushed on; but not a man ever came in contact with the enemy. The last survivor perished as he reached the points of the bayonets.'

Some idea of the determination displayed by the Highlanders in this terrific charge may be gathered from the fact that, in one part of the field, their bodies were afterwards found in layers of three and four deep. The slaughter was fearful, for, out of the five regiments which charged the English, almost all the leaders and men in the front rank were killed. So shaken was the English line, that, had the Macdonald regiments, well known to yield in valour to none of the clans, come up, the fortune of the day might have been

altered. But they never made an onset. Smarting and sullen at the affront which they conceived to have been put upon their name, they bore the fire of the English regiments without finching, and gave way to their rage by hewing at the heather with their swords. In vain their chiefs exhorted them to go forward; even at that terrible moment the pride of clanship prevailed. 'My God!' cried Macdonald of Keppoch, 'has it come to this, that the children of my tribe have forsaken me!' and he rushed forward alone, sword in hand, with the devotion of an ancient hero, and fell pierced with bullets.

The Lowland and foreign troops which formed the second line were powerless to retrieve the disaster. All was over. The rout became general, and the Prince was forced from the field, which he would not quit until dragged from it by his immediate body-guard.

Such was the last battle, the result of civil war, which has been fought on British soil. Those who were defeated have acquired as much glory from it as the conquerors—and even more, for never was a conquest sullied by such deeds of deliberate cruelty as were perpetrated upon the survivors of the battle of Culloden. It is not, however, the object of the present paper to recount these, or even the romantic history and¹ hairbreadth escapes of the Prince, whilst wandering on the mainland and through the Hebrides. Although a reward of thirty thousand pounds (an immense sum for the period) was set upon his head—although his secret was known to hundreds of persons in every walk of life, and even to the beggar and the outlaw—not one attempted to betray him. Not one of all his followers, in the midst of the misery which overtook them, regretted having drawn the sword in his cause, or would not again have gladly imperilled their lives for the sake of their beloved Chevalier. 'He went', says Lord Mahon, 'but not with him departed his remembrance from the Highlanders. For years and years did his name continue enshrined in their hearts and familiar to their tongues, their plaintive ditties resounding with his exploits and inviting his return. Again, in these strains, do they declare themselves ready to risk life and fortune for his cause; and even maternal fondness—the strongest, perhaps, of all human feelings—yields to the passionate devotion to Prince Charlie.'

The subsequent life of the Prince is a story of melancholy interest. We find him at first received in France with all the honours due to one who, though unfortunate, had exhibited a heroism rarely equalled and never surpassed: gradually he was neglected and slighted, as one of a doomed and unhappy race, whom no human exertion could avail to elevate to their former seat of power; and finally, when his

¹ and] or 1849¹

presence in France became an obstacle to the conclusion of peace, he was violently arrested and conveyed out of the kingdom. There can be little doubt that continued misfortune and disappointment had begun very early to impair his noble mind. For long periods he was a wanderer, lost sight of by his friends, and even by his father and brother. There are fragments of his writing extant which show how poignantly he felt the cruelty of his fortune. '*De vivre et pas vivre est beaucoup plus que de mourir!*' And again, writing to his father's secretary, eight years after Culloden, he says: 'I am grieved that our master should think that my silence was either neglect or want of duty; but, in reality, my situation is such that I have nothing to say but imprecations against the fatality of being born in such a detestable age.' An unhappy and uncongenial marriage tended still more to embitter his existence; and if at last he yielded to frailties which inevitably ensure degradation, it must be remembered that his lot had been one to which few men have ever been exposed, and the magnitude of his sufferings may fairly be admitted as some palliation for his weakness.

To the last, his heart was with Scotland. The following anecdote was related by his brother, Cardinal York, to Bishop Walker, the late Primus of the Episcopal Church of Scotland:—'Mr. Greathead, a personal friend of Mr. Fox, succeeded, when at Rome in 1782 or 1783, in obtaining an interview with Charles Edward; and, being alone with him for some time, studiously led the conversation to his enterprise in Scotland, and to the occurrences which succeeded the failure of that attempt. The Prince manifested some reluctance to enter upon these topics, appearing at the same time to undergo so much mental suffering, that his guest regretted the freedom he had used in calling up the remembrance of his misfortunes. At length, however, the Prince seemed to shake off the load which oppressed him; his eye brightened, his face assumed unwonted animation, and he entered upon the narrative of his Scottish campaigns with a distinct but somewhat vehement energy of manner—recounted his marches, his battles, his victories, his retreats, and his defeats—detailed his hairbreadth escapes in the Western Isles, the inviolable and devoted attachment of his Highland friends, and at length proceeded to allude to the terrible penalties with which the chiefs among them had been visited. But here the tide of emotion rose too high to allow him to go on—his voice faltered, his eyes became fixed, and he fell convulsed on the floor. The noise brought into his room his daughter, the Duchess of Albany, who happened to be in an adjoining apartment. "Sir", she exclaimed, "what is this? You have been speaking to my father about Scotland and the Highlanders! No one dares to mention those subjects in his presence."'

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He died on the 30th of January 1788, in the arms of the Master of Nairn. The monument erected to him, his father, and brother, in St. Peter's, by desire of George IV, was perhaps the most graceful tribute ever paid by royalty to misfortune—REGIO CINERI PIETAS REGIA.

CHARLES EDWARD AT VERSAILLES

ON THE ANNIVERSARY OF CULLODEN

[*Blackwood's Magazine*, July 1843¹]

TAKE away that star and garter—
Hide them from my aching sight!
Neither king nor prince shall tempt me
From my lonely room this night.
Fitting for the throneless exile
Is the atmosphere of pall,
And the gusty winds that shiver
'Neath the tapestry on the wall;
When the taper faintly dwindles
Like the pulse within the vein, 10
That to gay and merry measure
Ne'er may hope to bound again.
Let the shadows gather round me
While I sit in silence here,
Broken-hearted, as an orphan.
Watching by his father's bier.
Let me hold my still communion
Far from every earthly sound—
Day of penance—day of passion—
Ever, as the year comes round: 20
Fatal day! whereon the latest
Die was cast for me and mine—
Cruel day, that quelled the fortunes
Of the hapless Stuart line!
Phantom-like, as in a mirror,
Rise the griesly scenes of Death—
There before me in its wildness,
Stretches bare Culloden's heath:
There the broken clans are scattered,
Gaunt as wolves, and famine-eyed, 30
Hunger gnawing at their vitals,
Hope abandoned, all but pride—

¹ Neither the prose preface nor the notes appeared in '*Blackwood*'.

² aching] loathing '*Blackwood*'

Pride—and that supreme devotion
 Which the Southron never knew,
 And the hatred, deeply rankling,
 'Gainst the Hanoverian crew.
 Oh, my God! are these the remnants,
 These the wrecks of the array,
 That around the royal standard
 Gathered on the glorious day, 40
 When, in deep Glenfinnan's valley,
 Thousands on their bended knees
 Saw once more that stately ensign
 Waving in the northern breeze!
 When the noble Tullibardine
 Stood beneath its weltering fold,
 With the Ruddy Lion ramping
 In its field of tressured gold!
 When the mighty heart of Scotland,
 All too big to slumber more, 50
 Burst in wrath and exultation
 Like a huge volcano's roar!
 There they stand, the battered columns,
 Underneath the murky sky,
 In the hush of desperation,
 Not to conquer, but to die.
 Hark! the bagpipe's fitful wailing:
 Not the pibroch loud and shrill,
 That, with hope of bloody banquet,
 Lured the ravens from the hill— 60
 But a dirge both low and solemn,
 Fit for ears of dying men,
 Marshalled for their latest battle,
 Never more to fight again.
 Madness—madness! Why this shrinking?
 Were we less inured to war
 When our reapers swept the harvest
 From the field of red Dunbar?
 Bring my horse, and blow the trumpet!
 Call the riders of Fitz-James: 70
 Let Lord Lewis head the column!
 Valiant chiefs of mighty names—
 Trusty Keppoch! stout Glengarry!
 Gallant Gordon! wise Locheill!
 Bid the clansmen hold together,
 Fast and fell, and firm as steel.

41 Glenfinnan's] Glenfinnart's 'Blackwood' 43 ensign]
 banner 'Blackwood' 48 its] the 'Blackwood', 1849
 69 Bring] Fetch 'Blackwood' 71 head the column] bring
 the muster 'Blackwood' 74 Locheill] Lochiel 'Blackwood'
 75 hold] charge 'Blackwood'

Elcho! never look so gloomy—
 What avails a saddened brow?
 Heart, man! heart!—We need it sorely,
 Never half so much as now. 80
 Had we but a thousand troopers,
 Had we but a thousand more!
 Noble Perth, I hear them coming!
 Hark! the English cannons' roar.
 God! how awful sounds that volley,
 Bellowing through the mist and rain!
 Was not that the Highland slogan?
 Let me hear that shout again!
 Oh, for prophet eyes to witness
 How the desperate battle goes! 90
 Cumberland! I would not fear thee,
 Could my Camerons see their foes.
 Sound, I say, the charge at venture—
 'Tis not naked steel we fear:
 Better perish in the mêlée
 Than be shot like driven deer!
 Hold! the mist begins to scatter!
 There in front 'tis rent asunder,
 And the cloudy bastion crumbles
 Underneath the deafening thunder. 100
 There I see the scarlet gleaming!
 Now, Macdonald,—now or never!—
 Woe is me, the clans are broken!
 Father, thou art lost for ever!
 Chief and vassal, lord and yeoman,
 There they lie in heaps together,
 Smitten by the deadly volley,
 Rolled in blood upon the heather;
 And the Hanoverian horsemen,
 Fiercely riding to and fro, 110
 Deal their murderous strokes at random.—
 Ah, my God! where am I now?
 Will that baleful vision never
 Vanish from my aching sight?
 Must those scenes and sounds of terror
 Haunt me still by day and night?
 Yea! the earth hath no oblivion
 For the noblest chance it gave,
 None, save in its latest refuge—
 Seek it only in the grave! 120
 Love may die, and hatred slumber,
 And their memory will decay,
 As the watered garden recks not
 Of the drought of yesterday;
 99 bastion] battery 'Blackwood'

But the dream of power once broken,
 What shall give repose again?
 What shall charm the serpent-furies
 Coiled around the maddening brain?
 What kind draught can nature offer
 Strong enough to lull their sting? 130
 Better to be born a peasant
 Than to live an exiled king!
 Oh, these years of bitter anguish!—
 What is life to such as me,
 With my very heart as palsied
 As a wasted cripple's knee!
 Suppliant-like for alms depending
 On a false and foreign court;
 Jostled by the flouting nobles,
 Half their pity, half their sport, 140
 Forced to hold a place in pageant
 Like a royal prize of war,
 Walking with dejected features
 Close behind his victor's car;
 Styled an equal—deemed a servant—
 Fed with hopes of future gain:
 Worse by far is fancied freedom
 Than the captive's clanking chain!
 Could I change this gilded bondage
 Even for the dusky tower, 150
 Whence King James beheld his lady
 Sitting in the castle bower;
 Birds around her sweetly singing,
 Fluttering on the kindled spray,
 And the comely garden glowing
 In the light of rosy May.
 Love descended to the window—
 Love removed the bolt and bar—
 Love was warder to the lovers
 From the dawn to even-star. 160
 Wherefore, Love! didst thou betray me?
 Where is now the tender glance—
 Where the meaning looks once lavished
 By the dark-eyed Maid of France?
 Where the words of hope she whispered,
 When around my neck she threw
 That same scarf of brodered tissue,
 Bade me wear it and be true—
 Bade me send it as a token
 When my banner waved once more 170
 On the castled Keep of London,
 Where my fathers' waved before?

And I went and did not conquer—
 But I brought it back again—
 Brought it back from storm and battle—
 Brought it back without a stain;
 And once more I knelt before her,
 And I laid it at her feet,
 Saying, 'Wilt thou own it, Princess?
 There at least is no defeat!' 180
 Scornfully she looked upon me
 With a measured eye and cold—
 Scornfully she viewed the token,
 Though her fingers wrought the gold;
 And she answered, faintly flushing,
 'Hast thou kept it, then, so long?
 Worthy matter for a minstrel
 To be told in knightly song!
 Worthy of a bold Provençal,
 Pacing o'er the peaceful plain, 190
 Singing of his lady's favour,
 Boasting of her silken chain—
 Yet scarce worthy of a warrior
 Sent to wrestle for a crown!
 Is this all that thou hast brought me
 From thy fields of high renown?
 Is this all the trophy carried
 From the lands where thou hast been?
 It was brodered by a Princess—
 Canst thou give it to a Queen? 200
 Woman's love is writ in water!
 Woman's faith is traced on sand!—
 Backwards—backwards let me wander
 To the noble northern land:
 Let me feel the breezes blowing
 Fresh along the mountain-side!
 Let me see the purple heather,
 Let me hear the thundering tide,
 Be it hoarse as Corrievreckan
 Spouting when the storm is high— 210
 Give me but one hour of Scotland—
 Let me see it ere I die!
 Oh! my heart is sick and heavy—
 Southern gales are not for me;
 Though the glens are white with winter,
 Place me there and set me free.
 Give me back my trusty comrades—
 Give me back my Highland maid—

176 without a stain] without stain '*Blackwood*' misprint
 190 o'er] through '*Blackwood*', 1849¹, 1849² 196 fields]
 field '*Blackwood*' 202 on] in '*Blackwood*', 1849¹

Nowhere beats the heart so kindly
 As beneath the tartan plaid! 220
 Flora! when thou wert beside me,
 In the wilds of far Kintail—
 When the cavern gave us shelter
 From the blinding sleet and hail—
 When we lurked within the thicket,
 And, beneath the waning moon,
 Saw the sentry's bayonet glimmer,
 Heard him chant his listless tune—
 When the howling storm o'ertook us,
 Drifting down the island's lee, 230
 And our crazy bark was whirling
 Like a nutshell on the sea—
 When the nights were dark and dreary,
 And amidst the fern we lay,
 Faint and foodless, sore with travel,
 Waiting for the streaks of day;
 When thou wert an angel to me,
 Watching my exhausted sleep—
 Never didst thou hear me murmur—
 Couldst thou see how now I weep! 240
 Bitter tears and sobs of anguish,
 Unavailing though they be.
 Oh! the brave—the brave and noble—
 That have died in vain for me!

NOTES TO 'CHARLES EDWARD AT VERSAILLES'.

*Could I change this gilded bondage
 Even for the dusky tower,
 Whence King James beheld his lady
 Sitting in the castle bower.*—Lines 149–52.

James I of Scotland, one of the most accomplished kings that ever sat upon a throne, is the person here indicated. His history is a very strange and romantic one. He was son of Robert III, and immediate younger brother of that unhappy Duke of Rothesay who was murdered at Falkland. His father, apprehensive of the designs and treachery of Albany, had determined to remove him, when a mere boy, for a season from Scotland; and as France was then considered the best school for the education of one so important from his high position, it was resolved to send him thither, under the care of the Earl of Orkney, and Fleming of Cumbernauld. He accordingly embarked at North Berwick, with little escort—as there was a truce for the time between England and Scotland, and they were under no apprehension of meeting with any vessels, save those of the former nation. Notwithstanding this, the ship which carried the Prince was captured by an armed

236 Waiting] longing '*Blackwood*' (where the poem is printed in long lines)
 244 That] who '*Blackwood*'

merchantman, and carried to London, where Henry IV, the usurping Bolingbroke, utterly regardless of treaties, committed him and his attendants to the Tower.

'In vain', says Mr. Tytler, 'did the guardians of the young Prince remonstrate against this cruelty, or present to Henry a letter from the King his father, which, with much simplicity, recommended him to the kindness of the English monarch, should he find it necessary to land in his dominions. In vain did they represent that the mission to France was perfectly pacific, and its only object the education of the Prince at the French Court. Henry merely answered by a poor witticism, declaring that he himself knew the French language indifferently well, and that his father could not have sent him to a better master. So flagrant a breach of the law of nations, as the seizure and imprisonment of the heir-apparent, during the time of truce, would have called for the most violent remonstrances from any government except that of Albany. But to this usurper of the supreme power, the capture of the Prince was the most grateful event which could have happened; and to detain him in captivity became, from this moment, one of the principal objects of his future life: we are not to wonder, then, that the conduct of Henry not only drew forth no indignation from the governor, but was not even followed by any request that the Prince should be set at liberty.'

'The aged King, already worn out by infirmity, and now broken by disappointment and sorrow, did not long survive the captivity of his son. It is said the melancholy news were brought him as he was sitting down to supper in his palace of Rothesay in Bute, and that the effect was such upon his affectionate but feeble spirit, that he drooped from that day forward, refused all sustenance, and died soon after of a broken heart.'

James was finally incarcerated in Windsor Castle, where he endured an imprisonment of nineteen years. Henry, though he had not hesitated to commit a heinous breach of faith, was not so cruel as to neglect the education of his captive. The young King was supplied with the best masters, and gradually became an adept in all the accomplishments of the age. He is a singular exception from the rule which maintains that monarchs are indifferent authors. As a poet, he is entitled to a very high rank indeed—being, I think, in point of sweetness and melody of verse, not much inferior to Chaucer. From the window of his chamber in the Tower, he had often seen a young lady, of great beauty and grace, walking in the garden; and the admiration which at once possessed him soon ripened into love. This was Lady Jane Beaufort, daughter of the Earl of Somerset, a¹ niece of Henry IV, and who afterwards became his queen. How he loved and how he wooed her is told in his own beautiful poem of 'The King's Quhair', of which the following are a few stanzas:—

Now there was made, fast by the towris wall,
A garden fair; and in the corners set
An arbour green, with wandis long and small

¹ a] and 1349¹, 1349²

Railed about, and so with trees set
 Was all the place, and hawthorn hedges knet,
 That lyf was none walking there forbye,
 That might within scarce any wight espy.

So thick the boughis and the leavis greene
 Beshaded all the alleys that there were,
 And mids of every arbour might be seen
 The sharpe, greene, sweete juniper,
 Growing so fair, with branches here and there,
 That, as it seemed to a lyf without,
 The boughis spread the arbour all about.

And on the smalle greene twistis sat
 The little sweete nightingale, and sung
 So loud and clear the hymnis consecrat
 Of lovis use, now soft, now loud among,
 That all the gardens and the wallis rung
 Right of their song.

And therewith cast I down mine eyes again,
 Whereat¹ I saw, walking under the tower,
 Full secretly, now comen here to plain,
 The fairest or the freshest younge flower
 That e'er I saw, methought, before that hour:
 For which sudden abate, anon astart
 The blood of all my body to my heart.

And though I stood abasit for a lite,
 No wonder was; for why? my wittis all
 Were so o'ercome with pleasance and delight—
 Only through letting of my eyen fall—
 That suddenly my heart became her thrall
 For ever of free will, for of menace
 There was no token in her sweete face

Wherefore, Love! didst thou betray me?

Where is now the tender glance—

Where the meaning looks once lavished

By the dark-eyed Maid of France?—Lines 161-4.

There appears to be no doubt that Prince Charles was deeply attached to one of the princesses of the royal family of France. In the interesting collection called *Jacobite Memoirs*, compiled by Mr. Chambers from the voluminous MSS. of Bishop Forbes, we find the following passage from the narrative of Donald Macleod, who acted as a guide to the wanderer whilst traversing the Hebrides:—‘When Donald was asked, if ever the Prince used to give any particular toast, when they were taking a cup of cold water, or the like; he said that the Prince very often drank to the Black Eye—by which, said Donald, he meant the second daughter of France, and I never heard him name any particular health but that alone. When he spoke of that lady—which he did frequently—he appeared to be more than ordinarily well pleased.’

¹ Whereat] Where as 1849¹, 1849²

THE OLD SCOTTISH CAVALIER

THE 'gentle Lochell' may be considered as the pattern of a Highland Chief. Others who joined¹ the insurrection may have been actuated by motives of personal ambition, and by a desire for aggrandisement; but no such charge can be made against the generous and devoted Cameron. He was, as we have already seen, the first who attempted to dissuade the Prince from embarking in an enterprise which he conscientiously believed to be desperate; but, having failed in doing so, he nobly stood firm to the cause which his conscience vindicated as just, and cheerfully imperilled his life, and sacrificed his fortune, for the sake² of his master. There was no one, even among those who espoused the other side, in Scotland, who did not commiserate the misfortunes of this truly excellent man, whose humanity was not less conspicuous than his valour throughout the civil war, and who died in exile of a broken heart.

Perhaps the best type of the Lowland Cavalier of that period may be found in the person of Alexander Forbes, Lord Pitsligo, a nobleman whose conscientious views impelled him to take a different side from that adopted by the greater part of his house and name. Lord Forbes, the head of this very ancient and honourable family, was one of the first Scottish noblemen who declared for King William. Lord Pitsligo, on the contrary, who had³ been educated abroad, and early introduced to the circle at St. Germain's, conceived a deep personal attachment to the members of the exiled line. He was anything but an enthusiast, as his philosophical and religious writings, well worthy of a perusal, will show. He was the intimate friend of Fénelon, and throughout his whole life was remarkable rather for his piety and virtue than for keenness in political dispute.

After his return from France, Lord Pitsligo took his seat in the Scottish Parliament, and his parliamentary career has thus been characterised by a former writer.⁴ 'Here it is no discredit either to his head or heart to say, that, obliged to become a member of one of the contending factions of the time, he adopted that which had for its object the independence of Scotland, and restoration of the ancient race of monarchs. The advantages which were in future to arise from the great measure of a national union were so hidden by the mists of prejudice, that it cannot be wondered at if Lord Pitsligo, like many a high-spirited man, saw nothing but disgrace in a measure forced on by such corrupt means,

¹ joined] headed 1849¹, 1849² ² for the sake] at the bidding 1849¹, 1849² ³ who had] having 1849¹, 1849² ⁴ See *Blackwood's Magazine* for May 1829—Article, 'Lord Pitsligo'.
[Author's foot-note]

and calling in its commencement for such mortifying national sacrifices. The English nation, indeed, with a narrow, yet not unnatural view of their own interest, took such pains to encumber and restrict the Scottish commercial privileges, that it was not till the best part of a century after the event that the inestimable fruits of the treaty began to be felt and known. This distant period Lord Pitsligo could not foresee. He beheld his countrymen, like the Israelites of yore, led into the desert; but his merely human eye could not foresee that, after the extinction of a whole race—after a longer pilgrimage than that of the followers of Moses—the Scottish people should at length arrive at that promised land, of which the favourers of the Union held forth so gay a prospect.

‘Looking upon the Act of Settlement of the Crown, and the Act of Abjuration, as unlawful, Lord Pitsligo retired to his house in the country, and threw up attendance on Parliament. Upon the death of Queen Anne, he joined himself in arms with a general insurrection of the Highlanders and Jacobites, headed by his friend and relative the Earl of Mar.

‘Mar, a versatile statesman and an able intriguer, had consulted his ambition rather than his talents when he assumed the command of such an enterprise. He sank beneath the far superior genius of the Duke of Argyle; and, after the undecisive battle of Sheriffmuir, the confederacy which he had formed, but was unable to direct, dissolved like a snowball, and the nobles concerned in it were fain to fly abroad. This exile was Lord Pitsligo’s fate for five or six years. Part of the time he spent at the Court, if it can be called so, of the old Chevalier de Saint George, where existed all the petty feuds, chicanery, and crooked intrigues which subsist in a real scene of the same character, although the objects of the ambition which prompts such acts had no existence. Men seemed to play at being courtiers in that illusory Court, as children play at being soldiers.’

It would appear that Lord Pitsligo was not attainted for his share in Mar’s rebellion. He returned to Scotland in 1720, and resided at his castle in Aberdeenshire, not mingling in public affairs, but gaining, through his charity, kindness, and benevolence, the respect and affection of all around him. He was sixty-seven years of age when Charles Edward landed in Scotland. The district in which the estates of Lord Pitsligo lay was essentially Jacobite, and the young cavaliers only waited for a fitting leader to take up arms in the cause. According to Mr. Home, his example was decisive of the movement of his neighbours: ‘So when he who was so wise and prudent declared his purpose of joining Charles, most of the gentlemen in that part of the country who favoured the Pretender’s cause, put themselves under his command, thinking they could not follow a better or safer guide than Lord Pitsligo.’ His Lordship’s own account of the motives which

urged him on is peculiar:—‘I was grown a little old, and the fear of ridicule stuck to me pretty much. I have mentioned the weightier considerations of a family, which would make the censure still the greater, and set the more tongues agoing. But we are pushed on, I know not how: I thought—I weighed—and I weighed again. If there was any enthusiasm in it, it was of the coldest kind; and there was as little remorse when the affair miscarried, as there was eagerness at the beginning.’

The writer whom I have already quoted goes on to say—‘To those friends who recalled his misfortunes of 1715, he replied gaily, “Did you ever know me absent at the second day of a wedding?” meaning, I suppose, that having once contracted an engagement, he did not feel entitled to quit it while the contest subsisted. Being invited by the gentlemen of the district to put himself at their head, and having surmounted his own desires, he had made a farewell visit at a neighbour’s house, where a little boy, a child of the family, brought out a stool to assist the old nobleman in remounting his horse. “My little fellow,” said Lord Pitsligo, “this is the severest rebuke I have yet received, for presuming to go on such an expedition.”’

‘The die was however cast, and Lord Pitsligo went to meet his friends at the rendezvous they had appointed in Aberdeen. They formed a body of well-armed cavalry, gentlemen and their servants, to the number of a hundred men. When they were drawn up in readiness to commence the expedition, the venerable nobleman their leader moved to their front, lifted his hat, and, looking up to heaven, pronounced, with a solemn voice, the awful appeal,—“O Lord, Thou knowest that our cause is just!” then added the signal for departure—“March, gentlemen!”’

‘Lord Pitsligo, with his followers, found Charles at Edinburgh, on 8th October 1745, a few days after the Highlanders’ victory at Preston. Their arrival was hailed with enthusiasm, not only on account of the timely reinforcements¹, but more especially from the high character of their leader. Hamilton of Bangour, in an animated and eloquent eulogium upon Pitsligo, states that nothing could have fallen out more fortunately for the Prince than his joining them did—for it seemed as if religion, virtue, and justice were entering his camp, under the appearance of this venerable old man; and what would have given sanction to a cause of the most dubious right, could not fail to render sacred the very best.’

Although so far advanced in years, he remained in arms during the whole campaign, and was treated with almost filial tenderness by the Prince. After Culloden, he became,

¹ reinforcements] reinforcement 1849¹

like many others¹, a fugitive and an outlaw; but he² succeeded, like the Baron of Bradwardine, in finding a shelter upon the skirts of his own estate. Disguised as a mendicant, his secret was faithfully kept by the tenantry; and although it was more than surmised by the soldiers that he was lurking somewhere in the neighbourhood, they never were able to detect him. On one occasion he actually guided a party to a cave on the sea-shore, amidst the rough rocks of Buchan, where it was rumoured that he was lying in concealment; and on another, when overtaken by his asthma, and utterly unable to escape from an approaching patrol of soldiers, he sat down by the wayside, and acted his assumed character so well, that a good-natured fellow not only gave him alms, but condoned with him on the violence of his complaint.

For ten years he remained concealed, but in the mean time both title and estate were forfeited by attainder. His last escape was so very remarkable, that I may be pardoned for giving it in the language of the author of his Memoirs.

In March 1756, and of course long after all apprehension of a search had ceased, information having been given to the commanding officer at Fraserburgh that Lord Pitsligo was at that moment at the house of Auchiries, it was acted upon with so much promptness and secrecy that the search must have proved successful but for a very singular occurrence. Mrs. Sophia Donaldson, a lady who lived much with the family, repeatedly dreamt, on that particular night, that the house was surrounded by soldiers. Her mind became so haunted with the idea, that she got out of bed, and was walking through the room in hopes of giving a different current to her thoughts before she lay down again; when, day beginning to dawn, she accidentally looked out at the window as she passed it in traversing the room, and was astonished at actually observing the figures of soldiers among some trees near the house. So completely had all idea of a search been by that time laid asleep, that she supposed they had come to steal poultry—Jacobite poultry-yards affording a safe object of pillage for the English soldiers in those days. Mrs. Sophia was proceeding to rouse the servants, when her sister having awaked, and inquiring what was the matter, and being told of soldiers near the house, exclaimed in great alarm, that she feared they wanted something more than hens. She begged Mrs. Sophia to look out at a window on the other side of the house, when not only were soldiers seen in that direction, but also an officer giving instructions by signal, and frequently putting his fingers to his lips, as if enjoining silence. There was now no time to be lost in rousing the family, and all the

¹ others] more 1849¹, 1849²

² but he] but 1849¹, 1849²

haste that could be made was scarcely sufficient to hurry the venerable man from his bed into a small recess, behind the wainscot of an adjoining room, which was concealed by a bed, in which a lady, Miss Gordon of Towie, who was there on a visit, lay, before the soldiers obtained admission. A most minute search took place. The room in which Lord Pitsligo was concealed did not escape. Miss Gordon's bed was carefully examined, and she was obliged to suffer the rude scrutiny of one of the party, by feeling her chin, to ascertain that it was not a man in a lady's night-dress. Before the soldiers had finished their examination in this room, the confinement and anxiety increased Lord Pitsligo's asthma so much, and his breathing became so loud, that it cost Miss Gordon, lying in bed, much and violent coughing, which she counterfeited, in order to prevent the high breathings behind the wainscot from being heard. It may be easily conceived what agony she would suffer, lest, by overdoing her part, she should increase suspicion, and in fact lead to a discovery. The ruse was fortunately successful. On the search through the house being given over, Lord Pitsligo was hastily taken from his confined situation, and again replaced in bed; and as soon as he was able to speak, his accustomed kindness of heart made him say to his servant—"James, go and see that these poor fellows get some breakfast, and a drink of warm ale, for this is a cold morning; they are only doing their duty, and cannot bear me any ill-will." When the family were felicitating each other on his escape, he pleasantly observed,—“A poor prize, had they obtained it—an old dying man!”

This was the last attempt made on the part of Government to seize on the persons of any of the surviving insurgents. Three years before, Dr. Archibald Cameron, a brother of Lochell, having clandestinely revisited Scotland, was arrested, tried, and executed for high treason at Tyburn. The Government was generally blamed for this act of severity, which was considered rather to have been dictated by revenge than required for the public safety. It is, however, probable that they might have had secret information of certain negotiations which were still conducted in the Highlands by the agents of the Stuart family, and that they considered it necessary, by one terrible example, to overawe the insurrectionary spirit. This I believe to have been the real motive of an execution which otherwise could not have been palliated; and, in the case of Lord Pitsligo, it is quite possible that the zeal of a partisan may have led him to take a step which would not have been approved of by the Ministry. After the lapse of so many years, and after so many scenes of judicial bloodshed, the nation would have turned in disgust from the spectacle of an old man, whose private life was not only blameless, but exemplary, dragged

100 LAYS OF THE SCOTTISH CAVALIERS

to the scaffold, and forced to lay down his head in expiation of a doubtful crime; and this view derives corroboration from the fact that, shortly afterwards, Lord Pitsligo was tacitly permitted to return to the society of his friends, without further notice or persecution.

Dr. King, the Principal of St. Mary's Hall, Oxford, has borne the following testimony to the character of Lord Pitsligo:—"Whoever is so happy, either from his natural disposition, or his good judgment, constantly to observe St. Paul's precept, "to speak evil of no one," will certainly acquire the love and esteem of the whole community of which he is a member. But such a man is the *rara avis in terris*; and, among all my acquaintance, I have known only one person to whom I can with truth assign this character. The person I mean is the present Lord Pitsligo of Scotland. I not only never heard this gentleman speak an ill word of any man living, but I always observed him ready to defend any other person who was ill spoken of in his company. If the person accused were of his acquaintance, my Lord Pitsligo would always find something good to say of him as a counterpoise. If he were a stranger, and quite unknown to him, my Lord would urge in his defence the general corruption of manners, and the frailties and infirmities of human nature.

"It is no wonder that such an excellent man, who, besides, is a polite scholar, and has many other great and good qualities, should be universally admired and beloved—insomuch, that I persuade myself he has not one enemy in the world. At least, to this general esteem and affection for his person, his preservation must be owing; for since his attainder he has never removed far from his own house, protected by men of different principles, and unsought for and unmolested by Government." To which eulogy it might be added, by those who have the good fortune to know his representatives, that the virtues here acknowledged seem hereditary in the family of Pitsligo.

The venerable old nobleman was permitted to remain without molestation at the residence of his son, during the latter years of an existence protracted to the extreme verge of human life. And so, says the author of his Memoirs, "In this happy frame of mind,—calm and full of hope,—the saintly man continued to the last, with his reason unclouded, able to study his favourite volume, enjoying the comforts of friendship, and delighting in the consolations of religion, till he gently "fell asleep in Jesus". He died on the 21st of December 1762, in the eighty-fifth year of his age; and to his surviving friends the recollection of the misfortunes which had accompanied him through his long life was painfully awakened even in the closing scene of his mortal career—as his son had the mortification to be indebted to

a stranger, now the proprietor of his ancient inheritance by purchase from the Crown, for permission to lay his father's honoured remains in the vault which contained the ashes of his family for many generations.'

Such a character as this is well worthy of remembrance, and Lord Pittsligo has just title to be called the last of the old Scottish cavaliers. I trust that, in adapting the words of the following little ballad to a well-known English air, I have committed no unpardonable larceny.

THE OLD SCOTTISH CAVALIER

[*Blackwood's Magazine*, August 1844¹]

I

Come listen to another song,
Should make your heart beat high,
Bring crimson to your forehead,
And the lustre to your eye;—
It is a song of olden time,
Of days long since gone by.
And of a Baron stout and bold
As e'er wore sword on thigh!
Like a brave old Scottish cavalier,
All of the olden time! 10

II

He kept his castle in the north,
Hard by the thundering Spey;
And a thousand vassals dwelt around,
All of his kindred they.
And not a man of all that clan
Had ever ceased to pray
For the Royal race they loved so well,
Though exiled far away
From the steadfast Scottish cavaliers,
All of the olden time! 20

III

His father drew the righteous sword
For Scotland and her claims,
Among the loyal gentlemen
And chiefs of ancient names,

¹ The prose introduction did not appear in '*Blackwood*'.

1 Come listen to another] I'll sing you a new '*Blackwood*'
2 Should] that should '*Blackwood*' (where each stanza is printed as five long lines).

Who swore to fight or fall beneath
 The standard of King James,
 And died at Killiecrankie Pass,
 With the glory of the Græmes;
 Like a true old Scottish cavalier
 All of the olden time!

30

IV

He never owned the foreign rule,
 No master he obeyed,
 But kept his clan in peace at home,
 From foray and from raid;
 And when they asked him for his oath,
 He touched his glittering blade,
 And pointed to his bonnet blue,
 That bore the white cockade:
 Like a leal old Scottish cavalier,
 All of the olden time!

40

V

At length the news ran through the land—
 THE PRINCE had come again!
 That night the fiery cross was sped
 O'er mountain and through glen;
 And our old Baron rose in might,
 Like a lion from his den,
 And rode away across the hills
 To Charlie and his men,
 With the valiant Scottish cavaliers,
 All of the olden time!

50

VI

He was the first that bent the knee
 When the STANDARD waved abroad,
 He was the first that charged the foe
 On Preston's bloody sod;
 And ever, in the van of fight,
 The foremost still he trod,
 Until on bleak Culloden's heath,
 He gave his soul to God,
 Like a good old Scottish cavalier,
 All of the olden time!

60

VII

Oh! never shall we know again
 A heart so stout and true—
 The olden times have passed away,
 And weary are the new:

The fair White Rose has faded
 From the garden where it grew,
 And no fond tears save those of heaven,
 The glorious bed bedew
 Of the last old Scottish cavalier,
 All of the olden time!

70

67 save] but 'Blackwood

MISCELLANEOUS POEMS

BLIND OLD MILTON

[*Blackwood's Magazine*, December 1841]

PLACE me once more, my daughter, where the sun
 May shine upon my old and time-worn head,
 For the last time, perchance. My race is run;
 And soon amidst the ever-silent dead
 I must repose, it may be, half forgot.
 Yes! I have broke the hard and bitter bread
 For many a year, with those who trembled not
 To buckle on their armour for the fight,
 And set themselves against the tyrant's lot;
 And I have never bowed me to his might, 10
 Nor knelt before him—for I bear within
 My heart the sternest consciousness of right,
 And that perpetual hate of gilded sin
 Which made me what I am; and though the stain
 Of poverty be on me, yet I win
 More honour by it than the blinded train
 Who hug their willing servitude, and bow
 Unto the weakest and the most profane.
 Therefore, with unencumbered soul I go
 Before the footstool of my Maker, where 20
 I hope to stand as undebased as now!

Child! is the sun abroad? I feel my hair
 Borne up and wafted by the gentle wind,
 I feel the odours that perfume the air,
 And hear the rustling of the leaves behind.
 Within my heart I picture them, and then
 I almost can forget that I am blind,
 And old, and hated by my fellow-men.
 Yet would I fain once more behold the grace
 Of nature ere I die, and gaze again 30
 Upon her living and rejoicing face—
 Fain would I see thy countenance, my child,
 My comforter! I feel thy dear embrace—
 I hear thy voice, so musical and mild,
 The patient sole interpreter, by whom
 So many years of sadness are beguiled;
 For it hath made my small and scanty room
 Peopled with glowing visions of the past.
 But I will calmly bend me to my doom,
 And wait the hour which is approaching fast, 40

When triple light shall stream upon mine eyes,
 And heaven itself be opened up at last
 To him who dared foretell its mysteries.
 I have had visions in this drear eclipse
 Of outward consciousness, and clomb the skies,
 Striving to utter with my earthly lips
 What the diviner soul had half divined,
 Even as the Saint in his Apocalypse
 Who saw the inmost glory, where enshrined
 Sat He who fashioned glory. This hath driven 50
 All outward strife and tumult from my mind,
 And humbled me, until I have forgiven
 My bitter enemies, and only seek
 To find the straight and narrow path to heaven.

Yet I am weak—oh! how entirely weak,
 For one who may not love nor suffer more!
 Sometimes unbidden tears will wet my cheek,
 And my heart bound as keenly as of yore,
 Responsive to a voice, now hushed to rest,
 Which made the beautiful Italian shore, 60
 In all its pomp of summer vineyards drest,
 An Eden and a Paradise to me.
 Do the sweet breezes from the balmy west
 Still murmur through thy groves, Parthenope,
 In search of odours from the orange bowers?
 Still, on thy slopes of verdure, does the bee
 Cull her rare honey from the virgin flowers?
 And Philomel her plaintive chant prolong
 'Neath skies more calm and more serene than ours,
 Making the summer one perpetual song? 70
 Art thou the same as when in manhood's pride
 I walked in joy thy grassy meads among,
 With that fair youthful vision by my side,
 In whose bright eyes I looked—and not in vain?
 O my adored angel! O my bride!
 Despite of years, and woe, and want, and pain,
 My soul yearns back towards thee, and I seem
 To wander with thee, hand in hand, again,
 By the bright margin of that flowing stream.
 I hear again thy voice, more silver-sweet 80
 Than fancied music floating in a dream,
 Possess my being; from afar I greet
 The waving of thy garments in the glade,
 And the light rustling of thy fairy feet—
 What time as one half eager, half afraid,
 Love's burning secret faltered on my tongue,
 And tremulous looks and broken words betrayed

The secret of the heart from whence they sprung.
 Ah me! the earth that rendered thee to heaven
 Gave up an angel beautiful and young, 90
 Spotless and pure as snow when freshly driven;
 A bright Aurora for the starry sphere
 Where all is love, and even life forgiven.
 Bride of immortal beauty—ever dear!
 Dost thou await me in thy blest abode!
 While I, Tithonus-like, must linger here,
 And count each step along the rugged road;
 A phantom, tottering to a long-made grave,
 And eager to lay down my weary load!

I, who was fancy's lord, am fancy's slave. 100
 Like the low murmurs of the Indian shell
 Ta'en from its coral bed beneath the wave,
 Which, unforgetful of the ocean's swell,
 Retains within its mystic urn the hum
 Heard in the sea-grots where the Nereids dwell—
 Old thoughts still haunt me—unawares they come
 Between me and my rest, nor can I make
 Those aged visitors of sorrow dumb.
 Oh, yet awhile, my feeble soul, awake!
 Nor wander back with sullen steps again; 110
 For neither pleasant pastime canst thou take
 In such a journey, nor endure the pain.
 The phantoms of the past are dead for thee;
 So let them ever uninvoked remain,
 And be thou calm, till death shall set thee free.
 Thy flowers of hope expanded long ago,
 Long since their blossoms withered on the tree:
 No second spring can come to make them blow,
 But in the silent winter of the grave
 They lie with blighted love and buried woe. 120

I did not waste the gifts which nature gave,
 Nor slothful lay in the Circean bower;
 Nor did I yield myself the willing slave
 Of lust for pride, for riches, or for power.
 No! in my heart a nobler spirit dwelt;
 For constant was my faith in manhood's dower;
 Man—made in God's own image—and I felt
 How of our own accord we courted shame,
 Until to idols like ourselves we knelt,
 And so renounced the great and glorious claim 130
 Of freedom, our immortal heritage.
 I saw how bigotry, with spiteful aim,
 Smote at the searching eyesight of the sage;

How Error stole behind the steps of Truth,
 And cast delusion on the sacred page.
 So, as a champion, even in early youth
 I waged my battle with a purpose keen:
 Nor feared the hand of terror, nor the tooth
 Of serpent jealousy. And I have been
 With starry Galileo in his cell— 140
 That wise magician with the brow serene,
 Who fathomed space; and I have seen him tell
 The wonders of the planetary sphere,
 And trace the ramparts of heaven's citadel
 On the cold flag-stones of his dungeon drear.
 And I have walked with Hampden and with Vane—
 Names once so gracious to an English ear—
 In days that never may return again.
 My voice, though not the loudest, hath been heard
 Whenever Freedom raised her cry of pain, 150
 And the faint effort of the humble bard
 Hath roused up thousands from their lethargy,
 To speak in words of thunder. What reward
 Was mine, or theirs? It matters not; for I
 Am but a leaf cast on the whirling tide,
 Without a hope or wish, except to die.
 But truth, asserted once, must still abide,
 Unquenchable, as are those fiery springs
 Which day and night gush from the mountain-side,
 Perpetual meteors girt with lambent wings, 160
 Which the wild tempest tosses to and fro,
 But cannot conquer with the force it brings.

Yet I, who ever felt another's woe
 More keenly than my own untold distress;
 I, who have battled with the common foe,
 And broke for years the bread of bitterness;
 Who never yet abandoned or betrayed
 The trust vouchsafed me, nor have ceased to bless,
 Am left alone to wither in the shade.
 A weak old man, deserted by his kind— 170
 Whom none will comfort in his age, nor aid!

Oh, let me not repine! A quiet mind,
 Conscious and upright, needs no other stay;
 Nor can I grieve for what I leave behind,
 In the rich promise of eternal day.
 Henceforth to me the world is dead and gone,
 Its thorns unfelt, its roses cast away:
 And the old pilgrim, weary and alone,
 Bowed down with travel, at his Master's gate
 Now sits, his task of life-long labour done, 180

Thankful for rest, although it comes so late,
 After sore journey through this world of sin,
 In hope, and prayer, and wistfulness to wait,
 Until the door shall ope and let him in.

HERMOTIMUS

[*Blackwood's Magazine*, November 1839]

HERMOTIMUS, the hero of this ballad, was a philosopher, or rather a prophet, of Clazomenæ, who possessed the faculty, now claimed by the animal-magnetists, of effecting a voluntary separation between his soul and body; for the former could wander to any part of the universe, and even hold intercourse with supernatural beings, whilst the senseless frame remained at home. Hermotimus, however, was not insensible to the risk attendant upon this disunion; since, before attempting any of these aerial flights, he took the precaution to warn his wife, lest, ere¹ the return of his soul, the body should be rendered an unfit or useless receptacle. This accident, which he so much dreaded, at length occurred; for the lady, wearied out by a succession of trances, each of longer duration than the preceding, one day committed his body to the flames, and thus effectually put a stop to such unconnubial conduct. He received divine honours at Clazomenæ, but must nevertheless remain as a terrible example and warning to all husbands who carry their scientific or spiritual pursuits so far as to neglect their duty to their wives.

It is somewhat curious that Hermotimus is not the only person (putting the disciples of Mesmer and Dupotet altogether out of the question) who has possessed this miraculous power. Another and much later instance is recorded by Dr. George Cheyne, in his work entitled *The English Malady, or a Treatise on² Nervous Diseases*, as having come under his own observation; and as this case is exactly similar to that of the Prophet, it may amuse the reader to see how far an ancient fable may be illustrated, and in part explained, by the records of modern science. Dr. Cheyne's patient was probably cataleptic; but the worthy physician must be allowed to tell his own story:—

'Colonel Townshend, a gentleman of honour and integrity, had for many years been afflicted with a nephritic complaint. His illness increasing, and his strength decaying, he came from Bristol to Bath in a litter, in autumn, and lay at the Bell Inn. Dr. Baynard and I were called to him, and

¹ ere] upon '*Blackwood*' ² on] of '*Blackwood*', 1849¹, 1849²

attended him twice a-day ; but his vomitings continuing still incessant and obstinate against all remedies, we despaired of his recovery. While he was in this condition, he sent for us one morning: we waited on him with Mr. Skrine his apothecary. We found his senses clear, and his mind calm: his nurse and several servants were about him. He told us he had sent for us to give him an account of an odd sensation he had for some time observed and felt in himself; which was, that, by composing himself, *he could die or expire when he pleased*; and yet by an effort, or somehow, he could come to life again, which he had sometimes tried before he sent for us. We heard this with surprise; but, as it was not to be accounted for upon common principles, we could hardly believe the fact as he related it, much less give any account of it, unless he should please to make the experiment before us, which we were unwilling he should do, lest, in his weak condition, he might carry it too far. He continued to talk very distinctly and sensibly above a quarter of an hour about this surprising sensation, and insisted so much on our seeing the trial made, that we were at last forced to comply. We all three felt his pulse first—it was distinct, though small and thready, and his heart had its usual beating. He composed himself on his back, and lay in a still posture for some time: while I held his right hand, Dr. Baynard laid his hand on his heart, and Mr. Skrine held a clean looking-glass to his mouth. I found his pulse sink gradually, till at last I could not find any by the most exact and nice touch. Dr. Baynard could not feel the least motion in his heart, nor Mr. Skrine the least soil of breath on the bright mirror he held to his mouth; then each of us by turns examined his arm, heart, and breath, but could not, by the nicest scrutiny, discover the least symptom of life in him. We reasoned a long time about this odd appearance as well as we could, and all of us judging it inexplicable and unaccountable; and, finding he still continued in that condition, we began to conclude that he had indeed carried the experiment too far; and at last were satisfied he was actually dead, and were just ready to leave him. This continued about half an hour. As we were going away, we observed some motion about the body; and, upon examination, found his pulse and the motion of his heart gradually returning. He began to breathe gently and speak softly. We were all astonished to the last degree at this unexpected change; and, after some further conversation with him, and among ourselves, went away fully satisfied as to all the particulars of this fact, but confounded and puzzled, and not able to form any rational scheme that might account for it.¹

¹ 'Blackwood' inserts—CHEYNE'S *English Malady*.—and adds the paragraph given at the foot of pages 110-111.

HERMOTIMUS

I

‘WILT not lay thee down in quiet slumber?
 Weary dost thou seem, and ill at rest;
 Sleep will bring thee dreams in starry number—
 Let him come to thee and be thy guest.
 Midnight now is past—
 Husband! come at last—
 Lay thy throbbing head upon my breast.’

II

‘Weary am I, but my soul is waking;
 Fain I’d lay me gently by thy side,
 But my spirit then, its home forsaking, 10
 Thro’ the realms of space would wander wide—
 Everything forgot,
 What would be thy lot,
 If I came not back to thee, my bride!

III

‘Music, like the lute of young Apollo,
 Vibrates even now within mine ear;
 Soft and silver voices bid me follow—
 Yet my soul is dull and will not hear.
 Waking it will stay:
 Let me watch till day— 20
 Fainter will they come and disappear.’

IV

‘Speak not thus to me, my own—my dearest!
 These are but the phantoms of thy brain;
 Nothing can befall thee which thou fearest,
 Thou shalt wake to love and life again.
 Were thy sleep thy last,
 I would hold thee fast—
 Thou shouldst strive against me but in vain.

26 thy sleep] this sleep ‘*Blackwood*’, 1849¹ 27 would] should
 ‘*Blackwood*’, 1849¹

It may be proper to state, that the metrical form of this ballad, although hitherto unemployed by English writers, is well-known in Germany, and was exhibited in perfection by Goethe, in the composition of that beautiful poem ‘The Bride of Corinth’. It never can become a favourite metre with our poets, on account of the paucity of *double rhymes* in our language, or at least of such double rhymes as can be used without exciting ludicrous associations. Still it is well worth a trial; and any German scholar willing to carry the experiment further,

V

'Eros will protect us, and will hover,
 Guardian-like, above thee all the night, 30
 Jealous of thee, as of some fond lover
 Chiding back the rosy-fingered light—
 He will be thine aid:
 Canst thou feel afraid
 When his torch above us burneth bright?

VI

'Lo! the cressets of the night are waning,
 Old Orion hastens from the sky;
 Only thou of all things art remaining
 Unrefreshed by slumber—thou and I. 40
 Sound and sense are still,
 Even the distant rill
 Murmurs fainter now, and languidly.

VII

'Come and rest thee, husband!'—and no longer
 Could the young man that fond call resist:
 Vainly was he warned, for love was stronger—
 Warmly did he press her to his breast.
 Warmly met she his;
 Kiss succeeded kiss,
 Till their eyelids closed, with sleep oppressed.

VIII

Soon Aurora left her early pillow, 50
 And the heavens grew rosy-rich and rare;
 Laughed the dewy plain and glassy billow,
 For the Golden God himself was there;
 And the vapour-screen
 Rose the hills between,
 Steaming up, like incense, in the air.

IX

O'er her husband sat Ione bending—
 Marble-like and marble-hued he lay;
 Underneath her raven locks descending,
 Paler seemed his face and ashen grey; 60
 And so white his brow.
 White and cold as snow—
 'Husband!—Gods! his soul hath passed away!

is recommended to try his powers upon Goethe's ballad, which
 has always as yet assumed a very different shape in passing
 through the alembic of translation. [See below, p. 276.]

X

Raise ye up the pile with gloomy shadow—
 Heap it with the mournful cypress-bough!—
 And they raised the pile upon the meadow,
 And they heaped the mournful cypress too;
 And they laid the dead
 On his funeral bed,
 And they kindled up the flames below.

70

XI

Night again was come; but oh, how lonely
 To the mourner did that night appear!
 Peace nor rest it brought, but sorrow only,
 Vain repinings and unwonted fear.
 Dimly burned the lamp—
 Chill the air and damp—
 And the winds without were moaning drear.

XII

Hush! a voice in solemn whispers speaking,
 Breaks within the twilight of the room;
 And Ione, loud and wildly shrieking,
 Starts and gazes through the ghastly gloom.
 Nothing sees she there—
 All is empty air.
 All is empty as a rifled tomb.

80

XIII

Once again the voice beside her sounded,
 Low, and faint, and solemn was its tone—
 'Nor by form nor shade am I surrounded,
 Fleshly home and dwelling have I none.
 They are passed away—
 Woe is me! to-day
 Hath robbed me of myself, and made me lone.

90

XIV

'Vainly were the words of parting spoken;
 Evermore must Charon turn from me.
 Still my thread of life remains unbroken,
 And unbroken ever it must be;

xi 'Blackwood', 1849¹, and 1849², have this additional stanza between X and XI above:

Swiftly rose they, and the corse surrounded,
 Spreading out a pall into the air;
 And the sharp and sudden crackling sounded
 Mournfully to all the watchers there.
 Soon their force was spent,
 And the body blent
 With the embers' slow-expiring glare.

Only they may rest
Whom the Fates' behest
From their mortal mansion setteth free.

XV

'I have seen the robes of Hermes glisten—
Seen him wave afar his serpent wand; 100
But to me the Herald would not listen—
When the dead swept by at his command,
Not with that pale crew
Durst I venture too—
Ever shut for me the quiet land.

XVI

'Day and night before the dreary portal,
Phantom-shapes, the guards of Hades, lie;
None of heavenly kind, nor yet of mortal,
May unchallenged pass the warders by.
None that path may go, 110
If he cannot show
His drear passport to eternity.

XVII

'Cruel was the spirit-power thou gavest—
Fatal, O Apollo, was thy love!
Pythian! Archer! brightest God and bravest,
Hear, oh hear me from thy throne above!
Let me not, I pray,
Thus be cast away:
Plead for me, thy slave—O plead to Jove!

XVIII

'I have heard thee with the Muses singing— 120
Heard that full melodious voice of thine,
Silver-clear throughout the ether ringing—
Seen thy locks in golden clusters shine;
And thine eye so bright,
With its innate light,
Hath ere now been bent so low as mine.

XIX

'Hast thou lost the wish—the will—to cherish
Those who trusted in thy godlike power?
Hyacinthus did not wholly perish!
Still he lives, the firstling of thy bower; 130
Still he feels thy rays,
Fondly meets thy gaze,
Though but now the spirit of a flower.

107 guards] guard 'Blackwood'
wood', 1849¹, 1849²

112 drear] last 'Black-

XX

'Hear me, Phœbus! Hear me and deliver!
 Lo! the morning breaketh from afar—
 God! thou comest bright and great as ever—
 Night goes back before thy burning car;
 All her lamps are gone—
 Lucifer alone
 Lingers still for thee—the blessed star!

140

XXI

'Hear me, Phœbus!'—And therewith descended
 Through the window-arch a glory-gleam,
 All effulgent—and with music blended;
 For such solemn sounds arose as stream
 From the Memnon-lyre,
 When the morning fire
 Gilds the giant's forehead with its beam.

XXII

'Thou hast heard thy servant's prayer, Apollo!
 Thou dost call me, mighty God of Day!
 Fare-thee-well, Ione!'—And more hollow
 Came the phantom voice, then died away.
 When the slaves arose,
 Not in calm repose—
 Not in sleep, but death, their mistress lay.

150

CENONE

Ox the holy mount of Ida,
 Where the pine and cypress grow,
 Sate a young and lovely woman,
 Weeping ever, weeping low.
 Drearly throughout the forest
 Did the winds of autumn blow,
 And the clouds above were flying,
 And Scamander rolled below.
 'Faithless Paris! cruel Paris!'
 Thus the poor deserted spake—
 'Wherefore thus so strangely leave me?
 Why thy loving bride forsake?
 Why no tender word at parting—
 Why no kiss, no farewell take?
 Would that I could but forget thee!
 Would this throbbing heart might break!
 'Is my face no longer blooming?
 Are my eyes no longer bright?
 Ah! my tears have made them dimmer,
 And my cheeks are pale and white.

10

20

I have wept since early morning,
I shall weep the livelong night;
Now I long for sullen darkness,
As I once have longed for light.

'Paris! canst thou then be cruel!
Fair, and young, and brave thou art—
Can it be that in thy bosom
Lies so cold, so hard a heart?
Children were we bred together—
She who bore me suckled thee;
I have been thine old companion,
When thou hadst no more but me.

30

'I have watched thee in thy slumbers,
When the shadow of a dream
Passed across thy smiling features,
Like the ripple on a stream;
And so sweetly were the visions
Pictured there with lively grace,
That I half could read their import
By the changes on thy face.

40

'When I sang of Ariadne,
Sang the old and mournful tale,
How her faithless lover, Theseus,
Left her to lament and wail;
Then thine eyes would fill and glisten,
Her complaint could soften thee:
Thou hast wept for Ariadne—
Theseus' self might weep for me!

'Thou may'st find another maiden
With a fairer face than mine—
With a gayer voice, and sweeter,
And a spirit liker thine:
For if e'er my beauty bound thee,
Lost and broken is the spell;
But thou canst not find another
That will love thee half so well.

50

'O thou hollow ship, that bearest
Paris o'er the faithless deep!
Wouldst thou leave him on some island
Where alone the waters weep;
Where no human foot is moulded
In the wet and yellow sand—
Leave him there, thou hollow vessel!
Leave him on that lonely strand!

60

'Then his heart will surely soften,
 When his foolish hopes decay,
 And his older love rekindle,
 As the new one dies away.
 Visionary hills will haunt him,
 Rising from the glassy sea,
 And his thoughts will wander homeward 70
 Unto Ida and to me.

'O! that like a little swallow
 I could reach that lonely spot!
 All his errors would be pardoned,
 All the weary past forgot.
 Never should he wander from me—
 Never should he more depart;
 For these arms would be his prison,
 And his home would be my heart!' 80

Thus lamented fair CEnone,
 Weeping ever, weeping low,
 On the holy mount of Ida,
 Where the pine and cypress grow.
 In the self-same hour Cassandra
 Shrieked her prophecy of woe,
 And into the Spartan dwelling
 Did the faithless Paris go.

THE BURIED FLOWER

[*Blackwood's Magazine*, July 1848]

I

In the silence of my chamber,
 When the night is still and deep,
 And the drowsy heave of ocean
 Murmurs in its charmed sleep,

II

Oft I hear the angel voices
 That have thrilled me long ago,—
 Voices of my lost companions,
 Lying deep beneath the snow.

III

O, the garden I remember,
 In the gay and sunny spring,
 When our laughter made the thickets
 And the arching alleys ring! 10

IV

O the merry burst of gladness!
O the soft and tender tone!
O the whisper never uttered
Save to one fond ear alone!

V

O the light of life that sparkled
In those bright and bounteous eyes!
O the blush of happy beauty,
Tell-tale of the heart's surprise!

20

VI

O the radiant light that girdled
Field and forest, land and sea,
When we all were young together,
And the earth was new to me!

VII

Where are now the flowers we tended?
Withered, broken, branch and stem;
Where are now the hopes we cherished?
Scattered to the winds with them.

VIII

For ye, too, were flowers, ye dear ones!
Nursed in hope and reared in love,
Looking fondly ever upward
To the clear blue heaven above:

30

IX

Smiling on the sun that cheered us,
Rising lightly from the rain,
Never folding up your freshness
Save to give it forth again:

X

Never shaken, save by accents
From a tongue that was not free,
As the modest blossom trembles
At the wooing of the bee.

40

XI

O! 'tis sad to lie and reckon
All the days of faded youth,
All the vows that we believed in,
All the words we spoke in truth.

XII

Severed—were it severed only
 By an idle thought of strife,
 Such as time may knit together;
 Not the broken chord of life!

XIII

O my heart! that once so truly
 Kept another's time and tune,
 Heart, that kindled in the morning,
 Look around thee in the noon!

50

XIV

Where are they who gave the impulse
 To thy earliest thought and flow?
 Look across the ruined garden—
 All are withered, dropped, or low!

XV

Seek the birthplace of the Lily,
 Dearer to the boyish dream
 Than the golden cups of Eden,
 Floating on its slumberous stream;

60

XVI

Never more shalt thou behold her—
 She, the noblest, fairest, best:
 She that rose in fullest beauty,
 Like a queen, above the rest.

XVII

Only still I keep her image
 As a thought that cannot die;
 He who raised the shade of Helen
 Had no greater power than I.

XVIII

O! I fling my spirit backward,
 And I pass o'er years of pain;
 All I loved is rising round me,
 All the lost returns again.

70

XIX

Blow, for ever blow, ye breezes,
 Warmly as ye did before!
 Bloom again, ye happy gardens,
 With the radiant tints of yore!

XX

Warble out in spray and thicket,
All ye choristers unseen;
Let the leafy woodland echo
With an anthem to its queen!

80

XXI

Lo! she cometh in her beauty,
Stately with a Juno grace,
Raven locks, Madonna-braided
O'er her sweet and blushing face:

XXII

Eyes of deepest violet, beaming
With the love that knows not shame—
Lips, that thrill my inmost being,
With the utterance of a name.

XXIII

And I bend the knee before her,
As a captive ought to bow,—
Pray thee, listen to my pleading,
Sovereign of my soul art thou!

90

XXIV

O my dear and gentle lady!
Let me show thee all my pain,
Ere the words that late were prisoned
Sink into my heart again.

XXV

Love, they say, is very fearful
Ere its curtain be withdrawn,
Trembling at the thought of error
As the shadows scare the fawn.

100

XXVI

Love hath bound me to thee, lady!
Since the well-remembered day
When I first beheld thee coming
In the light of lustrous May.

XXVII

Not a word I dared to utter—
More than he who, long ago,
Saw the heavenly shapes descending
Over Ida's slopes of snow;

XXVIII

When a low and solemn music
 Floated through the listening grove,
 And the throstle's song was silenced,
 And the doling of the dove:

110

XXIX

When immortal beauty opened
 All its charms to mortal sight,
 And the awe of worship blended
 With the throbbing of delight.

XXX

As the shepherd stood before them
 Trembling in the Phrygian dell,
 Even so my soul and being
 Owned the magic of the spell;

120

XXXI

And I watched thee ever fondly,
 Watched thee, dearest! from afar,
 With the mute and humble homage
 Of the Indian to a star.

XXXII

Thou wert still the lady Flora
 In her morning garb of bloom;
 Where thou wert was light and glory,
 Where thou wert not, dearth and gloom.

XXXIII

So for many a day I followed,
 For a long and weary while,
 Ere my heart rose up to bless thee
 For the yielding of a smile,—

130

XXXIV

Ere thy words were few and broken
 As they answered back to mine,
 Ere my lips had power to thank thee
 For the gift vouchsafed by thine.

XXXV

Then a mighty gush of passion
 Through my inmost being ran;
 Then my older life was ended,
 And a dearer course began.

140

XXXVI

Dearer!—O! I cannot tell thee
What a load was swept away,
What a world of doubt and darkness
Faded in the dawning day!

XXXVII

All my error, all my weakness,
All my vain delusions fled;
Hope again revived, and gladness
Waved its wings above my head.

XXXVIII

Like the wanderer of the desert,
When, across the dreary sand, 150
Breathes the perfume from the thickets
Bordering on the promised land:

XXXIX

When afar he sees the palm-trees
Cresting o'er the lonely well,
When he hears the pleasant tinkle
Of the distant camel's bell:

XL

So a fresh and glad emotion
Rose within my swelling breast,
And I hurried swiftly onwards
To the haven of my rest. 160

XLI

Thou wert there with word and welcome,
With thy smile so purely sweet;
And I laid my heart before thee,
Laid it, darling! at thy feet.—

XLII

O ye words that sound so hollow
As I now recall your tone!
What are ye but empty echoes
Of a passion crushed and gone?

XLIII

Wherefore should I seek to kindle
Light, when all around is gloom? 170
Wherefore should I raise a phantom
O'er the dark and silent tomb?

XLIV

Early wert thou taken, Mary!
In thy fair and glorious prime,
Ere the bees had ceased to murmur
Through the umbrage of the lime.

XLV

Buds were blowing, waters flowing,
Birds were singing on the tree,
Everything was bright and glowing,
When the angels came for thee.

180

XLVI

Death had laid aside his terror,
And he found thee calm and mild,
Lying in thy robes of whiteness,
Like a pure and stainless child.

XLVII

Hardly had the mountain-violet
Spread its blossoms on the sod,
Ere they laid the turf above thee,
And thy spirit rose to God.

XLVIII

Early wert thou taken, Mary!
And I know 'tis vain to weep—
Tears of mine can never wake thee
From thy sad and silent sleep.

190

XLIX

O away! my thoughts are earthward!
Not asleep, my love, art thou!
Dwelling in the land of glory
With the saints and angels now.

L

Brighter, fairer far than living,
With no trace of woe or pain,
Robed in everlasting beauty,
Shall I see thee once again,

200

LI

By the light that never fadeth,
Underneath eternal skies,
When the dawn of resurrection
Breaks o'er deathless Paradise.

THE OLD CAMP

WRITTEN IN A ROMAN FORTIFICATION IN BAVARIA

[*Tait's Magazine*, September 1841]

I

THERE is a cloud before the sun,
 The wind is hushed and still,
 And silently the waters run
 Beneath the sombre hill.
 The sky is dark in every place
 As is the earth below:
 Methinks it wore the self-same face
 Two thousand years ago.

II

No light is on the ancient wall,
 No light upon the mound;
 The very trees, so thick and tall,
 Cast gloom, not shade, around.
 So silent is the place and cold,
 So far from human ken,
 It hath a look that makes me old,
 And spectres time again.

III

I listen, half in thought to hear
 The Roman trumpet blow—
 I search for glint of helm and spear
 Amidst the forest bough;
 And armour rings, and voices swell—
 I hear the legion's tramp,
 And mark the lonely sentinel
 Who guards the lonely camp.

IV

Methinks I have no other home,
 No other hearth to find;
 For nothing save the thought of Rome
 Is stirring in my mind.
 And all that I have heard or dreamed,
 And all I had forgot,
 Are rising up, as though they seemed
 The household of the spot.

12 gloom, not shade,] little shade '*Tait*'
 '*Tait*'

23 mark] see

V

And all the names that Romans knew
 Seem just as known to me,
 As if I were a Roman too—
 A Roman born and free:
 And I could rise at Cæsar's name,
 As though it were a charm
 To draw sharp lightning from the tame,
 And brace the coward's arm.

VI

And yet if yonder sky were blue,
 And earth were sunny gay,
 If nature wore the witching hue
 That decked her yesterday—
 The mound, the trench, the rampart's space
 Would move me nothing more
 Than many a sweet sequestered place
 That I have marked before.

VII

I could not feel the breezes bring
 Rich odours from the trees,
 I could not hear the linnets sing,
 And think on themes like these.
 The painted insects as they pass
 In swift and motley strife,
 The very lizard in the grass,
 Would scare me back to life.

50

VIII

Then is the past so gloomy now
 That it may never bear
 The open smile of nature's brow,
 Or meet the sunny air?
 I know not that—but joy is power,
 However short it last;
 And joy befits the present hour,
 If sadness fits the past.

60

33 that] which 'Tail' 38 though] if 'Tail' 40 brace]
 nerve 'Tail' 43 witching] summer 'Tail', 1849¹, 1849²
 47 sweet sequestered] well-remembered 'Tail' 56 scare]
 start 'Tail' 64 If] But 'Tail'

DANUBE AND THE EUXINE

1848

[*Blackwood's Magazine*, November 1848]

'DANUBE, Danube! wherefore com'st thou
 Red and raging to my caves?
 Wherefore leap thy swollen waters
 Madly through the broken waves?
 Wherefore is thy tide so sullied
 With a hue unknown to me;
 Wherefore dost thou bring pollution
 To the old and sacred sea?'

'Ha! rejoice, old Father Euxine!
 I am brimming full and red; 10
 Glorious tokens do I bring thee
 From my distant channel-bed.
 I have been a Christian river
 Dull and slow this many a year,
 Rolling down my torpid waters
 Through a silence morne and drear;
 Have not felt the tread of armies
 Trampling on my reedy shore;
 Have not heard the trumpet calling,
 Or the cannon's echoing roar; 20
 Only listened to the laughter
 From the village and the town,
 And the church-bells, ever jangling,
 As the weary day went down.
 So I lay and sorely pondered
 On the days long since gone by,
 When my old primæval forests
 Echoed to the war-man's cry;
 When the race of Thor and Odin
 Held their battles by my side, 30
 And the blood of man was mingling
 Warmly with my chilly tide.
 Father Euxine! thou rememb'rest
 How I brought thee tribute then—
 Swollen corpses, gashed and gory,
 Heads and limbs of slaughtered men?
 Father Euxine! be thou joyful!
 I am running red once more—

Heading 1848 not in '*Blackwood's* 1 com'st] comest '*Blackwood's*
 11 Glorious . . . thee] Noble tidings do I carry
 '*Blackwood's*', 1849¹, 1849² 20 echoing] gladsome '*Blackwood's*, 1849¹, 1849²

Not with heathen blood, as early,
 But with gallant Christian gore! 40
 For the old times are returning,
 And the Cross is broken down,
 And I hear the tocsin sounding
 In the village and the town:
 And the glare of burning cities
 Soon shall light me on my way—
 Ha! my heart is big and jocund
 With the draught I drank to-day.
 Ha! I feel my strength awakened,
 And my brethren shout to me; 50
 Each is leaping red and joyous
 To his own awaiting sea.
 Rhine and Elbe are plunging downward
 Through their wild anarchic land,
 Everywhere are Christians falling
 By their brother Christians' hand!
 Yea, the old times are returning,
 And the olden gods are here!
 Take my tribute, Father Euxine,
 To thy waters dark and drear! 60
 Therefore come I with my torrents,
 Shaking castle, crag, and town;
 Therefore, with my arms uplifted,
 Sweep I herd and herdsman down;
 Therefore leap I to thy bosom
 With a loud triumphal roar—
 Greet me, greet me, Father Euxine—
 I am Christian stream no more!'

THE SCHEIK OF SINAI IN 1830

FROM THE GERMAN OF FREILIGRATH

['Bon Gaultier and his friends,' *Tail's Magazine*, August 1844]

I

'LIFT me without the tent, I say,—
 Me and my ottoman,—

I'll see the messenger myself!
 It is the caravan

From Africa, thou sayest,
 And they bring us news of war?

63 my arms uplifted] the shout of thunder 'Blackwood', 1849',
 1849²

Draw me without the tent, and quick!
 As at the desert-well
 The freshness of the bubbling stream
 Delights the tired gazelle,
 So pant I for the voice of him
 That cometh from afar!'

10

II

The Scheik was lifted from his tent,
 And thus outspake the Moor:—
 'I saw, old Chief, the Tricolor
 On Algiers' topmost tower—
 Upon its battlements the silks
 Of Lyons flutter free.
 Each morning, in the market-place,
 The muster-drum is beat.
 And to the war-hymn of Marseilles
 The squadrons pace the street.
 The armament from Toulon sailed:
 The Franks have crossed the sea.

20

III

'Towards the south the columns marched
 Beneath a cloudless sky:
 Their weapons glittered in the blaze
 Of the sun of Barbary;
 And with the dusty desert sand
 Their horses' manes were white.
 The wild marauding tribes dispersed
 In terror of their lives;
 They fled unto the mountains
 With their children and their wives,
 And urged the clumsy dromedary
 Up the Atlas' height.

30

IV

'The Moors have ta'en their vantage-ground,
 The volleys thunder fast—
 The dark defile is blazing
 Like a heated oven-blast.
 The Lion hears the strange turmoil,
 And leaves his mangled prey—
 No place was that for him to feed—
 And thick and loud the cries,
Feu! Allah!—Allah! En avant!
 In mingled discord rise:
 The Franks have reached the summit;
 They have won the victory!

40

V

'With bristling steel, upon the top
 The victors take their stand;
 Beneath their feet, with all its towns,
 They see the promised land—
 From Tunis, even unto Fez,
 From Atlas to the seas.
 The cavaliers alight to gaze;
 And gaze full well they may,
 Where countless minarets stand up
 So solemnly and grey,
 Amidst the dark-green masses
 Of the flowering myrtle-trees.

50

60

VI

'The almond blossoms in the vale,
 The aloe from the rock
 Throws out its long and prickly leaves,
 Nor dreads the tempest's shock:
 A blessed land, I ween, is that,
 Though luckless is its Bey.
 "There lies the sea—beyond lies France!
 Her banners in the air
 Float proudly and triumphantly—
 A salvo! come, prepare!"
 And loud and long the mountains rang
 With that glad artillery.'

70

VII

'Tis they!' exclaimed the aged Scheik.
 'I've battled by their side—
 I fought beneath the Pyramids!
 That day of deathless pride—
 Red as thy turban, Moor, that eve,
 Was every creek in Nile!
 But tell me'—and he griped his hand—
 'Their Sulstaun? Stranger, say,—
 His form—his face—his gesture, man—
 Thou saw'st him in the fray?
 His eye—what wore he?' But the Moor
 Sought in his vest awhile.

80

VIII

'Their Sulstaun, Scheik, remains at home
 Within his palace walls;
 He sends a Pasha in his stead
 To brave the bolts and balls.

He was not there. An Aga burst
 For him through Atlas' hold. 90
 Yet I can show thee somewhat too;
 A Frankish Cavalier
 Told me his effigy was stamped
 Upon this medal here—
 He gave it me with others
 For an Arab steed I sold.'

IX

The old man took the golden coin:
 Gazed steadfastly awhile,
 If that could be the Sultaun
 Whom from the banks of Nile 100
 He guided o'er the desert path?—
 Then sighed and thus spake he—
 'Tis not *his* eye—'tis not *his* brow—
 Another face is there:
 I never saw this man before—
 His head is like a pear!
 Take back thy medal, Moor—'tis not
 That which I thought to see.'

98 Gazed] looked '*Tait*' 108 thought] hoped '*Tait*', 1849¹,
 1849²

EPITAPH OF CONSTANTINE KANARIS

FROM THE GERMAN OF WILHELM MÜLLER

[*Blackwood's Magazine*, May 1847]

I AM Constantine Kanaris.
 I, who lie beneath this stone,
 Twice into the air in thunder
 Have the Turkish galleys blown.
 In my bed I died—a Christian,
 Hoping straight with Christ to be;
 Yet one earthly wish is buried
 Deep within the grave with me—
 That upon the open ocean,
 When the third Armada came, 10
 They and I had died together,
 Whirled aloft on wings of flame.
 Yet 'tis something that they've laid me
 In a land without a stain:
 Keep it thus, my God and Saviour,
 Till I rise from earth again!

THE REFUSAL OF CHARON¹

FROM THE ROMAIC

[*Blackwood's Magazine*, May 1840]

WHY look the distant mountains
 So gloomy and so drear?
 Are rain-clouds passing o'er them,
 Or is the tempest near?
 No shadow of the tempest
 Is there, nor wind nor rain—
 'Tis Charon that is passing by,
 With all his gloomy train.

The young men march before him,
 In all their strength and pride: 10
 The tender little infants,
 They totter by his side;
 The old men walk behind him,
 And earnestly they pray—
 Both young and old imploring him
 To grant some brief delay.

'O Charon! halt, we pray thee,
 By yonder little town,
 Or near that sparkling fountain,
 Where the waters wimple down! 20
 The old will drink and be refreshed,
 The young the disc will fling,
 And the tender little children
 Pluck flowers beside the spring.'

'I will not stay my journey,
 Nor halt by any town,
 Near any sparkling fountain,
 Where the waters wimple down:
 The mothers coming to the well
 Would know the babes they bore; 30
 The wives would clasp their husbands,
 Nor could I part them more.'

¹ According to the superstition of the modern Greeks, Charon performs the function which their ancestors assigned to Hermes, of conducting the souls of the dead to the other world. [Author.]

Title '*Blackwood*' has Ballads from the Romaic. I. Charon and his Charge. *Τί εἶναι μαῖρα τὰ βουνά, καὶ στεκοῦν βουρκωμένα*; For II-IV see pp. 421-3 3 rain-clouds passing] tempests sweeping '*Blackwood*' 4 tempest] rain-cloud '*Blackwood*' 15 young and old] old and young 1849¹, 1849² 16 some] a '*Blackwood*' 18 By yonder] Beside some '*Blackwood*', 1849¹ 19 that] some '*Blackwood*', 1849¹ 30 know] meet '*Blackwood*' 31 clasp] know '*Blackwood*'

BOTHWELL

A POEM

IN SIX PARTS

[1856]

Reprinted from the third edition, revised, 1858. The revision was very drastic, but the variants are not such as to justify the elaborate *apparatus criticus* which would be necessary to set them out. The historical notes also are omitted.

TO
SIR EDWARD BULWER LYTTON, BART., M.P.,
IN MEMORY OF A VISIT TO HOLYROOD,
THIS POEM IS INSCRIBED
BY THE AUTHOR.

BOTHWELL

PREFACE

[TO FIRST EDITION]

THE scene of this Poem, which is in the form of a monologue, is laid in the fortress of Malmoe, where Bothwell was confined. I have endeavoured to make available for poetical composition the most striking events in the history of Mary, Queen of Scots, down to the period when she parted from Bothwell at Carberry Hill; and in doing so, I wish it to be distinctly understood, that, except in minor and immaterial matters, necessary for the construction of a Poem of this length, I have not deviated from what I consider to be the historical truth. I have founded my idea of the character of Bothwell on the description of him given by Throckmorton and Herries: the one representing him to be 'glorious, boastful, rash, and hazardous', and the other as 'a man high in his own conceit, proud, vicious, and vainglorious above measure'. The reader will find, in the Notes appended¹, some information regarding the more obscure and contested points of the history of this remarkable period.

EDINBURGH, *10th July*, 1856.

PREFACE TO THIRD EDITION

IN sending a Third and Revised Edition of this Poem from the press, the Author is desirous of expressing his grateful acknowledgment to the public for the favour shown to his work, notwithstanding the many blemishes which were apparent in the first edition. Some of these blemishes were no doubt attributable to over-hasty composition; while others arose from the difficulty of constructing a poem of this length in the form of a Monologue, and also from a desire (perhaps too scrupulously adhered to) of deviating in no respect from what the Author firmly believes to be the historical truth. In point of form the poem has undergone no alteration: but much care has been bestowed upon the correction of isolated passages; some superfluous matter has been excised; and other amendments made, in the hope of giving more strength and vivacity to the expression, and more interest to the narrative. In particular, the concluding canto has undergone strict revision, as, in its original form, it bore marks

[¹ Omitted in this edition.]

of a certain degree of languor, the consequence of a temporary illness. I say this by way of explanation only, conscious that I have many shortcomings to answer for, with no such excuse to plead.

I have further to thank those of my reviewers, who, in a spirit of honesty and kindness, have referred to my defects; for by doing so I must needs acknowledge that they have rendered me an essential service. In these days of voluminous publication, criticism is valuable to the reader, inasmuch as it places him on his guard; but it is invaluable to every author, who has the sincere desire of cultivating his art to the utmost of his ability, because it warns him of the faults which are the most glaringly conspicuous in his style, and rebukes him for every instance of undue carelessness or neglect. The best proof of my acquiescence in the justice of some of the remarks upon the construction of certain passages of *Bothwell*, is the fact that I have made emendations accordingly; but beyond that, I have altered, or recast, many passages against which no censure was directed. The truth is, that, on the eve of publication, I did not feel by any means satisfied with my own performance. I had an instinctive feeling that I ought to have done it better. I was conscious that occasionally the expression did not adequately convey the idea, and that the versification was sometimes defective both in melody and in power. But there is a peculiarity attendant upon poetical composition, which is well known to those who practise it, though it may not be so to the general reader—and that is, that a certain period must elapse before the writer can discern the precise nature of his faults, or regain the power of correcting them. So long as the heat engendered by the original effort is upon him, his attempts at emendation will be in vain. But after a time, unless he is vainglorious and egotistical in the extreme, the faults which he has committed become as apparent to him as they were to others; and surely, then, it is his duty to retrieve such faults, or at least to make the attempt, although it is quite possible that he may not succeed in doing that in a manner commensurate with his desire.

As the general structure of *Bothwell*, as I now lay it before the public, has undergone no material alteration, it is still amenable to the criticism which was directed against its form. I trust, however, that it is so far amended in detail, as to show the public that the indulgence which they have extended to my humble efforts is deeply and gratefully appreciated.

EDINBURGH, 1st January, 1858.

BOTHWELL

PART FIRST

I

COLD—cold! The wind howls fierce without;
 It drives the sleet and snow;
 With thundering hurl, the angry sea
 Smites on the crags below.
 Each wave that leaps against the rock
 Makes this old prison reel—
 God! cast it down upon my head,
 And let me cease to feel!
 COLD—cold! The brands are burning out,
 The dying embers wane; 10
 The drops fall plashing from the roof
 Like slow and sullen rain.
 COLD—cold! And yet the villain kernes
 Who keep me fettered here.
 Are feasting in the hall above,
 And holding Christmas cheer.
 When the wind pauses for its breath,
 I hear their idiot bray,
 The laugh, the shout, the stamping feet,
 The song and roundelay: 20
 They pass the jest, they quaff the cup,
 The Yule-log sparkles brave,
 They riot o'er my dungeon-vault
 As though it were my grave.
 Ay, howl again, thou bitter wind,
 Roar louder yet, thou sea,
 And drown the gusts of brutal mirth
 That mock and madden me!
 Ho, ho! the Eagle of the North
 Has stooped upon the main! 30
 Scream on, O eagle, in thy flight,
 Through blast and hurricane—
 And, when thou meetest on thy way
 The black and plunging bark
 Where those who pilot by the stars
 Stand quaking in the dark,
 Down with thy pinion on the mast,
 Scream louder in the air,
 And stifle in the wallowing sea
 The shrieks of their despair! 40
 Be my avenger on this night,
 When all, save I, are free;

Why should I care for mortal man,
 When men care nought for me?
 Care nought? They loathe me, one and all,
 Else why should I be here—
 I, starving in a foreign cell,
 A Scottish prince and peer?

II

O, that the madness, which at times
 Comes surging through my brain, 50
 Would smite me deaf, and dumb, and blind,
 No more to wake again—
 Would make me, what I am indeed,
 A beast within a cage,
 Without the sense to feel my bonds,
 Without the power to rage—
 Would give me visions dark and drear,
 Although they were of hell,
 Instead of memories of the place
 From which I stooped and fell! 60

III

I was the husband of a Queen,
 The partner of a throne;
 For one short month the sceptred might
 Of Scotland was my own.
 The crown that father Fergus wore
 Lay ready for my hand,
 Yea, but for treason, I had been
 The monarch of the land;
 The King of Scots, in right of her
 Who was my royal bride, 70
 The fairest woman on the earth
 That e'er the sun espied.
 O Mary—Mary! Even now,
 Seared as I am to shame,
 The blood grows thick around my heart
 At utterance of thy name!
 I see her, as in bygone days,
 A widow, yet a child,
 Within the fields of sunny France,
 When heaven and fortune smiled. 80
 The violets grew beneath her feet,
 The lilies budded fair,
 All that is beautiful and bright
 Was gathered round her there.
 O lovelier than the fairest flower
 That ever bloomed on green,
 Was she, the darling of the land,
 That young and spotless Queen!

The sweet, sweet smile upon her lips,
 Her eyes so kind and clear,
 The magic of her gentle voice,
 That even now I hear!
 And nobles knelt, and princes bent
 Before her as she came;
 A Queen by gift of nature she,
 More than a Queen in name.
 Even I, a rugged Border lord,
 Unused to courtly ways.
 Whose tongue was never tutored yet
 To lisp in polished phrase;
 I, who would rather on the heath
 Confront a feudal foe,
 Than linger in a royal hall
 Where lackeys come and go—
 I, who had seldom bent the knee
 At mass, or yet at prayer,
 Bowed down in homage at her feet,
 And paid my worship there!

90

100

IV

My worship? yes! My fealty? ay!—
 Rise, Satan, if thou wilt,
 And limn in fire, on yonder wall,
 The pictures of my guilt—
 Accuser! Tempter! Do thy worst,
 In this malignant hour,
 When God and man abandon me,
 And I am in thy power—
 Come up, and show me all the past,
 Spare nothing that has been;
 Thou wert not present, juggling fiend,
 When first I saw my Queen!

110

120

V

I worshipped; and as pure a heart
 To her, I swear, was mine,
 As ever breathed a truthful vow
 Before Saint Mary's shrine:
 I thought of her, as of a star
 Within the heavens above,
 That such as I might gaze upon,
 But never dare to love.
 I swore to her that day my troth,
 As belted earl and knight,
 That I would still defend her throne,
 And aye protect her right,
 Well; who dare call me traitor now?
 My faith I never sold;

130

These fingers never felt the touch
Of England's proffered gold.
Free from one damning guilt at least
My soul has ever been ;
I did not sell my country's rights,
Nor fawn on England's Queen ! 140
Why stand'st thou ever at my head ?
False devil, hence, I say !
And seek for traitors, black as hell,
'Mongst those who preach and pray !
Get thee across the howling seas,
And bend o'er Murray's bed,
For there the falsest villain lies
That ever Scotland bred.
False to his vows, a wedded priest ;
Still falser to the Crown ; 150
False to the blood, that in his veins
Made bastardy renown ;
False to his sister, whom he swore
To guard and shield from harm ;
The head of many a felon plot,
But never once the arm !
What tie so holy that his hand
Hath snapt it not in twain ?
What oath so sacred but he broke
For selfish end or gain ? 160
A verier knave ne'er stepped the earth
Since this wide world began ;
And yet—he bandies texts with Knox,
And walks a pious man !

VI

Get thee to crafty Lethington,
That alchemist in wile,
To grim Glencairn, the preacher's pride,
To Cassilis and Argyle—
To Morton, steeped in lust and guilt,
My old confederate he !— 170
O well for him that 'twixt us twain
There rolls the trackless sea !
O well for him that never more
On Scottish hill or plain,
My foot shall tread, my shadow fall,
My voice be heard again :
For there are words that I could speak
Would make him blench and quail,
Yea, shiver like an aspen tree,
Amidst his men of mail !— 180
Get thee to them, who sold their Queen
For foreign gold and pay ;

Assail them, rack them, mock them, fiend!
 Bide with them till the day,
 But leave me here alone to-night—
 No fear that *I* will pray!

VII

O many a deed that I have done
 Weighs heavy on my soul;
 For I have been a sinful man,
 And never, since my life began, 190
 Have bowed me to control.
 Perchance my temper was too rude,
 Perchance my pride too great;
 Perchance it was my fantasy,
 Perchance it was my fate!
 I will not pour my muttered guilt
 In any shaveling's ear,
 Nor ask for prayer from mortal lips,
 Were death and judgment near.
 They shall not weigh those deeds of mine 200
 By moral code or rule;
 Man deals with man by human laws,
 And judges like a fool!

VIII

In Scotland, when my name is heard,
 From Orkney's utmost bound,
 To where Tweed's silver waters run,
 Men shudder at the sound.
 They will not even deign to pray
 For one so lost and vile—
 They, who have raced to see me ride, 210
 They, who have waited by my side
 For nothing save a smile!
 And yet I am not guiltier now
 Than when they sought me there;
 Not more deserving of their curse,
 Less worthy of their prayer!

IX

What charge—what crime? Come, trusty peers,
 Come all of you, and say
 Why I should be a prisoner here,
 And you be free to-day! 220
 You dealt with England—that's assured!
 You murdered Riccio too;
 And he who planned that felon deed,
 And, with his wife in view,
 Plunged his weak dagger in the corpse—
 That coward wretch I slew!

X

A king? he was no king of mine!
 A weak and worthless boy—
 A fool in whose insensate hand
 The fairest jewel of the land 230
 Lay a neglected toy.
 A man, indeed, in outward form,
 But not a man in mind,
 Less fit by far to rule the realm
 Than many a vassal hind.
 O had I earlier sought the place
 That late—too late—was mine;
 Had I but seen the woman then,
 And deemed her less divine,
 When first upon the Scottish shore 240
 She, like a radiant star,
 Descended, bringing hope and mirth
 From those bright realms afar;
 When all men's hearts were blithe and glad
 To greet their youthful Queen,
 And once again within the land
 A happy face was seen—
 I might have made my homage more
 Than that of subject peer,
 And with my oath of loyalty 250
 Have blent a vow more dear.
 For I had friends enow to back;
 And, with my kith and kin,
 Who held the Borders, far and wide,
 And hemmed the marches in,
 I might have bid defiance bold,
 To all who dared advance
 To claim the hand of Scotland's Queen,
 The widow-child of France!
 Had I but sent the cry abroad, 260
 That neither English peer,
 Nor Scottish lord from England's court
 Should be our master here—
 Had I but trusted to myself,
 And bravely ta'en my stand,
 Then Darnley never would have been
 The King within the land.

XI

Too late—too late! Poor Mary stood
 Unfriended and alone,
 The tenant of a dreary hall, 270
 A melancholy throne:
 No more, as in her grandsire's days,
 Surrounded by a ring

Of valiant lords and faithful knights,
 Who for fair Scotland and her rights
 Would die beside their King.
 Set was the star of chivalry
 That erst had gleamed so pure
 Upon the crests of those who lay
 On Flodden's fatal moor. 230
 Gone were the merry times of old,
 The masque, and mirth, and glee;
 And wearier was the palace then
 Than prison needs to be.
 Forbidden were the vesper bells,—
 They broke the Sabbath calm!
 Hushed were the notes of minstrelsy—
 They chimed not with the psalm:
 'Twas sin to smile, 'twas sin to laugh,
 'Twas sin to sport or play, 290
 And heavier than a hermit's fast
 Was each dull holiday.
 Was but the sound of laughter heard,
 Or tinkling of a lute,
 Or, worse than all, in royal hall,
 The tread of dancing foot—
 Then to a drove of gaping clowns
 Would Knox with unction tell
 The vengeance that in days of old
 Had fallen on Jezebel! 300

XII

She stood alone, without a friend
 On whom her arm might lean:
 No true and trusty counsellors
 Were there to serve their Queen;
 But moody men, with sullen looks,
 And faces hard and keen.
 They who professed the later faith
 Were trembling for their hold
 Of the broad lands and fertile fields
 Owned by the Church of old. 310
 Apostles they of easy walk—
 No martyrdom or pain—
 What marvel if they loved a creed
 That brought such pleasant gain?
 What marvel if their greedy hearts
 Were wrung with abject fear,
 Lest Rome should yet resume her sway,
 And strip them of their gear?
 How could they serve a Papist Queen
 With loyal hearts and true? 320

How own a rank idolatress,
 With Paradise in view?
 England was near, and England's Queen
 Defied both France and Rome—
 What marvel if they went to her,
 And broke their faith at home?

XIII

And she, the sister, maiden Queen—
 Rare maid and sister she!
 True daughter of the Tudor line,
 Who claimed her crown by right divine, 330
 And ruled o'er land and sea—
 She who might well, without disgrace,
 Or any thought of fear,
 Have digned, from her established place,
 To succour one so near—
 She, whom her slaves call wise in thought,
 And generous in deed,—
 How did she deal with Scotland's Queen,
 How help her in her need?

XIV

By heaven!—if I dare speak the word,— 340
 I, steeped in guilt and crime,
 I, who must bear the heaviest curse
 Of this distracted time—
 By heaven! I think, had Scotland stood
 Unfriended and alone,
 Left to herself, without intrigue
 From any neighbour throne;
 Free to decide, and mould, and fix
 The manner of her sway,
 No Scottish soul had ever stooped 350
 To cozen or betray!
 I say it—I, the twice betrayed,
 Their victim and their tool—
 I, whom they made the sacrifice
 For their unrighteous rule;
 I say it, even for the men
 Who drove me here to shame—
 Theirs is the lesser, paltrier guilt,
 And theirs the meaner blame!

XV

They durst not, had they stood alone, 360
 Inheritors of names
 That over Christendom have flown,
 As stream the northern flames,—

Whose fathers, in their silent graves,
 Sleep peacefully and well,
 Scotland's great champions while they lived,
 And greater when they fell—
 They durst not so have wronged their blood,
 And smirched their fair renown.
 Have flung their honour to the winds, 370
 And leagued against the crown.
 But at the gate the Temptress stood,
 Not beautiful nor young;
 Nor luring, as a Syren might,
 By magic of her tongue;
 High and imperious, stately, proud,
 Yet artful to beguile,
 A woman, without woman's heart,
 Or woman's sunny smile:
 By nature tyrannous and vain. 380
 By state-craft false and mean,
 She hated Mary from her soul,
 As woman and as Queen!

XVI

Men hate, because in act or strife
 They cross each other's path;
 Short is the space for jealousy,
 And fierce the hour of wrath:
 Their passion, like the autumn flood,
 Sweeps o'er the plains below;
 But woman's hate runs deeper far, 390
 Though noiseless in its flow.
 A fairer face, a higher place,
 More worship, more applause,
 Will make a woman loathe her friend
 Without a deadlier cause.
 The darkness struggles with the light,
 The gloaming with the day,
 Ay, even in the depths of night
 Will shadows force their way:
 For ever, when the peerless moon 400
 Is riding clear in heaven,
 Some sullen cloud, by envious winds,
 Athwart its disc is driven.
 Yet vainly does the shadow seek
 A borrowed light to steal,
 The cloud is darker for the orb
 It cannot quite conceal.
 And so, though minions bent the knee
 To England's haughty Queen,
 And swore in verse and fulsome rhyme, 410

That never, since the birth of time,
Was such an angel seen,
The instinct of her cold proud heart
Despised the sordid lie,
Yet still she smiled, as women smile,
Who will not deign to sigh.

XVII

And cause had she to hate and fear
Past woman's pride alone;
For Boleyn's daughter sate not safe
Nor surely on her throne. 420
And many a lord of England thought
On Mary's right and claim,
And owned her in their wassail cups
As Queen, though not by name.
But why this paltering with the past?
Why mutter idly here,
As though I were in dull debate
With council or with peer?
Is it the dripping from the roof,
Or plunging of the sea, 430
That thus infects me with the weight
Of their monotony?
Why should I brood o'er perished things,
And, like a dotard, dream
Of visions seen but not fulfilled
Far up life's whirling stream?
Man cannot quite control his thoughts,
Nor keep them in his power,
Yet these of mine have wandered wide
Within the bypast hour. 440
What might have been, in phantom mist
Has vanished long ago;
I need not try to trace it out,
What was, and is, I know.
Enough—no word of love was breathed
In Mary's ear by me,
When most she needed manly aid,
And when her hand was free.
But Darnley came, and woo'd, and won—
They say that death should close 450
All count of hate and enmity
Between the deadliest foes—
And yet—I will not forge a lie,
Here on my wretched bed—
I hated Darnley while he lived;
I hate him now, though dead!

XVIII

She wedded Darnley—and a fool

In every sense was he,
 With scarce the wit to be a knave
 If born in low degree. 460
 But folly, when it walks abroad
 In royal guise and strain.
 Will never lack for knavery
 To loiter in its train.
 Loose comrades of the baser sort
 Were always by his side,
 To whisper lewdness in his ear,
 And pander to his pride.
 And men who wore a graver mask,
 Whose hearts were all untrue, 470
 Essayed—it was an easy task—
 To make him traitor too!

XIX

The madman! Had he only known
 His duty, style, and place,
 When lifted up beside the throne,
 And raised to such a grace—
 Had he—the winner of the prize,
 For whose transcendent charms,
 If deeds availed, not idle words,
 Through Europe wide, a thousand lords, 480
 Famous and proud, had drawn their swords
 And courted death in arms—
 Had he been gentle, faithful, true,
 Kind, courteous, nobly-bred,
 To her who found him fugitive,
 Yet took him to her bed—
 Why then, in spite of England's Queen,
 Of treason hatched at home,
 Of foreign league, or civil war,
 Or danger yet to come, 490
 He might have kept the foremost place
 Without contending claim,
 Have won a kingdom for his race
 And left an honoured name.

XX

Not as a Prince of high estate
 Came Darnley to the Queen:
 His pride provoked the nobles' hate,
 His folly stirred their spleen.
 And fiercely blazed Elizabeth's wrath
 Against the luckless pair, 500
 For still the phantom in her path
 Had been a Scottish heir.
 And well she knew the ancient strain
 That rings through Scotland free—

That the French Queen should bear the son
 To rule all Britain to the sea,
 And from the Bruce's blood should come
 As near as in the ninth degree.
 She was a tigress, all too fierce
 For rashest love's essay; 510
 None durst approach the royal lair
 Where mateless long she lay.
 And it was more than gall to her
 To think that Mary's son
 Must sit one day upon her seat—
 Must end what she begun.
 She might have frowned a cold consent,
 Had Mary stooped to take,
 As spouse, an English vassal peer,
 For her kind sister's sake. 520
 But Darnley stood too near the throne,
 And strong his place had been,
 If ready, like a valiant knight,
 Against the world to hold his right,
 And more—as love and honour bade,
 To vindicate the choice she made,
 By duty to the Queen.
 But neither honour, truth, nor love
 Had power his selfish soul to move;
 As cold of heart, as weak of brain, 530
 Unused his passion to restrain,
 At once the madman claimed to be
 In name and power a King!
 He, weak as water, frail as sand,
 A beggar when on Mary's hand
 He placed the marriage ring!
 Then, false to her who gave him all,
 And lost to sense of shame,
 He banded with her deadliest foes
 To stain her spotless name! 540

XXI

There was that Riccio—sharp and sly;
 No friend of mine, I swear,
 For in that dark Italian eye
 Was craft beyond my mastery,
 And in his cold and subtle smile
 I read the evidence of guile
 Was deep implanted there.
 He could not bend me to his will—
 No fanatic was I;
 Nor would I lend a helping hand 550
 To rivet on my native land
 The chains of Italy.

Right little cared I for the creeds
 Of either Church, I trow;
 I recked not which should win or lose,
 And more—I reck not now.
 But lost on me was all his speech,
 His policy was vain:
 What was to me the Papal cause
 In France or yet in Spain? 560
 I never stood, as Atholl did,
 A soldier sworn of Rome,
 Nor asked for foreign surgery
 To stanch the wounds at home.
 Yet Riccio may have faithful been,
 And to his mistress true.
 For those who hated him the worst
 Were knaves and traitors too.
 I cannot tell—but this I know,
 That till my dying hour 570
 I never shall forget the shriek
 That rung from Mary's bower.

XXII

'Twas night—mirk night—the slect beat on,
 The wind, as now, was rude,
 And I was lonely in my room
 In dreary Holyrood.
 I heard a cry, a tramp of men,
 A clash of steel below,
 And from my window, in the court
 I saw the torches glow. 580
 More common were such sounds to me
 Than hum of evening hymn;
 I caught my sword, and hurried out
 Along the passage dim.
 But O, the shriek that thrilled me then—
 The accents of despair,
 The man's imploring agony,
 The woman's frantic prayer!
 'O, for the love of God and Christ,
 Forbear—I will not fly! 590
 O mistress—Queen—protect me yet,
 I am not fit to die!'

'Hold! hold your hands! you shall not strike,
 Unless you slay me too;
 My guard! O help! they kill the Queen!
 Help! husband—nobles—you—
 O Ruthven—Douglas—as you trust
 For mercy in your need,
 For Christ's dear sake, be satisfied—
 Do not this monstrous deed! 600

What! Darnley, thou? let go my arm—
Unhand me, dastard knave!
To me—to me—all Scottish hearts—
Help! treason! Come and save!’

XXIII

A door flew wide. I saw them all—
Ruthven in mail complete,
George Douglas, Ker of Fawdonside,
And Riccio at their feet.
With rapiers drawn and pistols bent,
They seized their wretched prey; 610
They wrenched her garments from his grasp,
They stabbed him where he lay.
I saw George Douglas raise his arm,
I saw his dagger gleam;
And then I heard the dying yell,
And Mary's piteous scream.
I saw her writhe in Darnley's arms
As in a serpent's fold—
The coward! he was pale as death,
But would not loose his hold! 620
And then the torches waved and shook,
And louder grew the din,
And up the stair, and through the doors
The rest came trooping in.
What could I do? No time was that
To listen or to wait;
Thronged were the rooms with furious men,
And close beset the gate.
Morton and Lindsay kept the court,
With many a deadly foe; 630
And swords are swift to do their work
When blood begins to flow.
Darkling I traced the passage back
As swiftly as I came,
For in the crowd that tossed beneath
I heard them shout my name.
Enough!—that night one victim died
Before Queen Mary's face,
And in my secret heart I doomed
Another in his place. 640
Not that I cared for Riccio's life,
They might have worked their will;
Though base it was for belted knights
So poor a wretch to kill.
But I had seen my Queen profaned,
Outraged before my face,
By him, the dastard, heartless boy,
The land's and our disgrace.

'Twas he devised the felon plot—
'Twas he that planned the crime—
He led the murderers to her room—
And—God—at what a time!

650

XXIV

They call me savage, brutal, base,
And more—because I wed
A trembling, sickly, shrewish dame,
And put her from my bed.
Heaven wot, the match was ill ordained;
Her heart was given elsewhere,
And for a second courtship, I
Had neither time nor care.
It may be that she pined alone;
It may be in my hall
She met with ruder company
Than pleased her taste withal:
I may have wronged her by neglect,
I may have galled her pride;
But never brooked she scathe or scorn
While she was Bothwell's bride.

660

XXV

But he, whom Mary's love had raised
To such a high degree,
The lord and husband of her heart,
The father soon to be,
The man who, in the hour of pain,
Should still have kept her side—
How paid he back the matchless debt,
How did he tend his bride?
Why, had he never left her room,
But, like the grooms of yore,
To lay him on the rushes down
His lady's nest before,
To guard her all the livelong night,
And slumber scarce till dawn.
When her dear voice, so low and sweet,
Like breathings of a fawn,
Told that the time of rest was o'er,
And then a simple hymn
Arose, as if an angel led
The choir of seraphim—
Would such a service have been more
Than he was bound to give?
Nay, if he dared to make it less,
Deserved the boy to live?

670

680

690

XXVI

I was a witness on that night
Of all his shame and guilt;
I saw his outrage on the Queen,
I saw the blood he spilt;
And, ere the day had dawned, I swore,
Whilst spurring through the sand,
I would avenge that treachery,
And slay him with my hand— 700
Or, in the preachers' holier phrase,
Would purge him from the land!

XXVII

Ah me! and this is Christmas eve;
And here alone I lie,
With nothing save my own wild thoughts
For bitter company!
My own wild thoughts, that will not pass,
Howe'er I bid them go—
My torture, yet the only friends
That visit me below. 710
Full many a hearth is decked this night
To hail the blessed morn,
On which, in ages long ago,
The Saviour child was born—
The churches all are wreathed with green,
The altars set with flowers,
And happy lowly hearts wait on
And count the passing hours;
Until the midnight chimes proclaim
The hallowed season come, 720
When Heaven's broad gates are opened wide,
And Hell's loud roar is dumb.
Then myriad voices in acclaim
The song of homage yield,
That once from angels' lips was heard
By shepherds in the field.
Stilled for a time are angry thoughts,
The hearts of men are mild;
The father with a holier thrill
Bends o'er his slumbering child; 730
New is the kiss the husband gives
Unto his wedded wife,
For earthly love, when blest by Heaven,
Ends not with earthly life;
And, fountain-like, o'er all the world,
Where Christ's dear name is known,
Arise the sounds of prayer and praise
Toward the eternal throne.

But I, a slave in bondage here,
Racked—torn by mad despair—
How can I falter forth the words
Of praise or yet of prayer?
Men drove me from them, as a wolf
From mountain-folds is driven,
And what I could not win on earth
How dare I seek from Heaven?
Ay, howl again, thou winter wind—
Roar louder yet, thou sea!
For nothing else can stun the thoughts
That rise to madden me!

740

750

PART SECOND

I

THE sun is bright, the day is warm,
The breeze is blowing free—
Come, I will rouse me from my lair,
And look upon the sea.
'Tis clear and blue, with here and there
A little fleck of foam;
And yonder glides a stately ship,
Bound on her voyage home.
The fishers, on the scanty sward,
Spread out their nets to dry,
And whistle o'er their lazy task
In happy vacancy.
Swift by the window skims the tern,
On light and glancing wing,
And every sound that rises up
Gives token of the spring.
Fair is the sight, yet strange to me;
No memories I recall,
While gazing on the headland cliffs,
And waves that leap and fall;
No visions of my boyish days,
Or manhood's sterner prime,
Arise from yonder watery waste,
To cheer me for a time.

10

20

II

For I was reared among the hills,
Within a Border home.
Where, brawling down their narrow glens,
The mountain torrents come;

And well I know the bonny braes
 Where the first primrose blows, 30
 And shrinking tufts of violets
 Rise from the melting snows,
 Ere yet the hazel leaf is out,
 Or birches show their green,
 Or, on the sad and sullen ash,
 A kindling bud is seen.
 O Hermitage, by Liddel's side,
 My old ancestral tower!
 Were I again but lord of thee—
 Not owning half the power 40
 That in my days of reckless pride
 I held, but cast away—
 I would not leave thee, Border keep,
 Until my dying day!
 Wise was Buccleuch, and Cessford too,
 Who stoutly held their own,
 And little cared, amidst their clans,
 For threat from either throne.
 They range at will the mountain paths,
 They hear the falcon cry; 50
 And here, within a loathly cell,
 A fettered slave am I.

III

Who owns thee now, fair Hermitage?
 Who sits within my hall?
 What banner flutters in the breeze
 Above that stately wall?
 Does yet the court-yard ring with tramp
 Of horses and of men;
 Do bay of hounds and bugle-note
 Sound merry from the glen? 60
 Or art thou, as thy master is,
 A rent and ruined pile,
 Once noble, but deserted now
 By all that is not vile?
 What matters it? These eyes of mine
 Shall never see thee more;
 Still in my thought must thou abide
 As stately as of yore,
 When, Warden of the Marches three,
 In Mary's right I came 70
 To still the rugged Border feuds,
 And trample out the flame.

IV

Good faith! I had but little zeal
 To meddle with the knaves,

Who simply kept their fathers' rule,
And fought for bloody graves.
No war was then between the lands,
Else swift and sure, I ween,
Each Border clan, on Scottish soil,
Had mustered for their Queen ; 80
The tidings of an English raid
Had joined them, heart and hand ;
For well the jackmen knew the wealth
Of canny Cumberland.
One note of war—and all our feuds
Had vanished like the snow
From off the fells by Teviot-side,
When the warm May winds blow.
But peace abroad breeds strife at home ;
Old cause of quarrel rose ; 90
Clan fought with clan, and name with name.
As fierce and deadly foes.
To them came I in evil hour—
Most perilous the tide ;
For he who seeks to part a fray,
Wins strokes from either side.
Saint Andrew ! 'twas no easy task
To hunt an Armstrong down,
Or make a Johnstone yield his sword
At summons from the Crown : 100
Yet, ere a week had passed away,
One half my work was done,
And safe within my castle lay
Whitehaugh and Mangerton.
I had them all, but only one,
John Elliot of the Park,
As stalwart and as bold a man
As ever rode by dark.
I sought him far, I sought him near,
He baffled all my men ; 110
At last I met him, face to face,
Within the Billhope glen.

V

Short parley passed between us twain—
'Thou art the Warden ?' 'Ay !
Thou Elliot of the Park ?' 'I am.'
'Wilt yield thee ?' 'Come and try !'
We lighted down from off our steeds,
We tied them to a tree ;
The sun was sinking in the west,
And all alone were we. 120
Out flew the steel, and then began
A sharp and desperate strife ;

For Elliot fought to 'scape the cord,
I fought for fame and life.
Ha, ha! were he alive again,
And on this dungeon floor,
What joy, with such a man as that,
To cross the sword once more!
The blows he fetched were stark and strong,
And so were mine, I ween, 130
Until I cleft his head-piece through,
And stretched him on the green.
'Wilt yield thee now?' 'I will not yield,
But an ye promise grace.'
'That must you ask upon your knee,
Before our Sovereign's face.'
Blinded with blood, he struggled up—
'Lord Earl!' he said, 'beware!
No man shall take me living yet;
Now follow, if you dare!' 140
I slipped upon the broken moss;
And in the sheugh we rolled,
Death-grappling, silent, heaving each
Within the other's hold.
He passed above me, and I felt—
Once—twice—his dagger drive;
But mine went deeper through his breast—
I rose, but half alive!
All spun around me—trees and hills—
A mist appeared to rise; 150
Yet one thing saw I clearly yet
Before my fading eyes:
Not half a rood beyond the burn,
A man lay stiff and stark;
I knew it was my stubborn foe,
John Elliot of the Park.
I strove in vain to sound my horn,
No further strength had I;
And reeling in that lonely glen,
I fell—but not to die. 160

VI

I wakened in the Hermitage
From out my heavy swoond,
Thanks to the leech, who would not cease
From probing of my wound:
And there I lay, for many a day,
Weak, weary, dull, and wam,
With little blood within my veins,
To make me feel like man.
In sooth, it was a heavy time—
I heard the bugles blow, 170

The horses neigh, the bridles ring,
The soldiers come and go.
I heard the voice of Ormiston,
In short and gruff command,
As outwards from the castle-gate
He led his trooper band.
Then silence; and that hateful sound,
The leech's stealthy tread—
Aha! when I had strength to stir,
How swift the villain fled! 180
Then the long shades of afternoon—
The twilight fastening in—
The night, when still I heard the brook
Come roaring down the linn.
Strange! that my memory should recall
Those distant things to view—
That every sound, and sight, and thought,
Should visit me anew!
Have I not heard a hundred times
The winter tempests roar, 190
Since first they spread that wretched couch
Here, on the dungeon floor?
Have I not heard the ocean-surge
Come bellowing to the strand,
When peals of thunder shook the heaven,
When flashed the levin brand?
The hurleys that might wake the dead,
Pass from me with their rage;
Not so the sounds that reached my bed
In lonely Hermitage. 200

VII

But O, that day, when first I rose,
A cripple, from my lair—
Threw wide the casement, breathed my fill,
Of fresh and wholesome air.
Drank in new life, and felt once more
The pulse's stirring play—
O, madly in my heart I keep
The memory of that day!
I thought to hear the gorcock crow,
Or ouzel whistle shrill, 210
When, lo! a gallant company
Came riding up the hill:
No banner was displayed on high,
No sign of war was seen,
No armed band, with spear and brand,
Encompassed Scotland's Queen.
She came, on gentle errand bound—
The generous and the free—

She came to cheer her wounded knight,
 She came to comfort me.

220

VIII

She waited not for guard or groom,
 But passed into the hall;
 Around her were the four Maries,
 Herself the rose of all.
 I never thought that woman's voice
 Could thrill my being so,
 As when she thanked me for my zeal
 In accents soft and low.
 I saw the tear within her eye,
 When, bending down to me,
 She placed her lily hand in mine,
 And bade me quit my knee.
 'Dear lord,' she said, 'tis woman's right
 To comfort when she may;
 Then chafe not, if we take by storm
 Your Border-keep to-day.
 We come not to invade your hall,
 Or rudely mar your rest;
 Though well I know, at fitter time,
 I were a welcome guest.
 But could I quit the Border-side
 Without my thanks to him
 Who paid his service far too well,
 At risk of life and limb?
 Ah, Bothwell! you have bravely done,
 And all my thanks are poor;
 Would God that more were bent like you
 To make my throne secure!
 True heart! strong arm! I cannot place
 A chaplet on your brow,
 For the old rites of chivalry
 Are lost or banished now;
 But, trust me, never was a Queen
 More debtor to a peer,
 Than I, brave Earl, am proud to own,
 Before the presence here!
 How say you, brother?'

230

240

250

IX

At the word,
 I felt a sudden chill;
 I knew not Murray as he rode
 Beside her up the hill.
 I marked him not within my hall—
 No wonder, for my eye

260

Was fixed on one bright form alone
 Of all that company!
 But there he stood, the pulseless man,
 The calculating lord,
 Swart in the Congregation's garb,
 And leaning on his sword.
 Upon his lip there was a smile
 That almost seemed a sneer;
 270 Softly he spoke, but what he said
 Dwelt not within mine ear.
 Some phrase it was of mild assent,
 Framed in that glossy strain
 That statesmen use to hide their thoughts
 When honest words were vain;
 Some staid and studied compliment,
 As soft and cold as snow—
 I would not, after desperate fight,
 Have thanked a trooper so!
 280 And then he paused, and glancing round
 Upon the royal train,
 Began to falter forth excuse,
 Like one who spoke in pain,
 Why Darnley came not with the Queen—
 How could the fool be there?
 Had he not left his Sovereign's Court,
 Despite her tears and prayer?—
 Left her, with base unmanly threat,
 Alone to weep and pine;
 290 That he might lie in harlots' laps,
 And hiccup o'er his wine?

X

Well know I now what Murray meant,
 But then I did not care—
 The sight of Darnley in my hall
 Had darkened all the air.
 In sooth, I wished them far away,
 The Maries, and the rest.
 That I might throw me at her feet,
 Might ease my bursting breast,—
 300 Might tell her how I dared to love,
 And how I hid my flame,
 Till he, the wretched, perjured boy,
 Had filled his cup with shame—
 Might ask her, of her sovran grace,
 To take and keep my vow,
 To rule James Hepburn's heart and hand,
 Not give him promise now—
 One word, one little word of hope
 Was all that he would crave,—
 310

Hope? Never hope could rise for me,
Till Darnley filled his grave!

XI

For then indeed I felt the spell
That turned weak Arran's brain,
That drove the luckless Chastellar
To love and die in vain.
With tenfold power that magic charm
Was stirring in my soul;
Though she had spurned me from her feet,
I must have spoke the whole. 320
Far better to have told her all,
And waked at once her scorn,
Than brood o'er passions ill-concealed,
And wait for crimes unborn.
Unborn, but yet, alas! conceived—
Well—well! what reck's it now?
A child might weep, and moan, and fret,
That yonder glorious bow,
Which right before me spans the seas,
Should melt in mist and rain: 330
What is it but a pageantry
That will not come again?
Yea, let it pass with other things,
Old hope, remorse, and fear;
All these are phantoms, dead and gone—
They shall not force a tear!

XII

Bright was the morn, and fresh the wind,
And clear the trumpet's call,
As, strong once more in heart and limb,
I issued from my hall. 340
A hundred troopers, cased in mail,
Were mounted on the sward;
Men who would ride through steel and flame
At signal of their lord.
The knaves! I know they loved me well;
And what a wild acclaim
Rang through the valley, up the glen,
To greet me as I came!
Then spears were raised, and swords were swung,
And banners tossed on high, 350
In such a storm of wild delight,
As drives men onward to the fight,
For death or victory!
The blood was warm within me then,
And proudly did it bound,

As, clad again in knightly garb,
 I wheeled my charger round;
 O'er moss and moor, o'er hill and heath,
 Right gallantly we sped,
 Until we paused, and drew the rein
 Hard by the river's head.
 Backward on Castle Hermitage
 One lingering look I cast;
 I saw it in its strength and pride—
 That look, it was the last!

360

XIII

Men say that in those northern seas,
 Far out from human view,
 There lies a huge and whirling pit,
 As deep as though the globe were split,
 To let the waters through;
 All round and round for many a mile
 Spreads the strong tide's resistless coil;
 And if a ship should chance to pass
 Within the Maelstrom's sweep,
 Nor helm nor sail will then avail
 To drive her through the deep.
 Headlong she rolls on racing waves,
 Still narrowing in her round,
 Still drawn towards the awful brim
 Of that abyss profound.
 Then one sharp whirl, one giant surge,
 A lurch, a plunge, a yell,—
 And down for ever goes the ship
 Into the raging hell!
 God wot, I am not fanciful;
 But from that fatal day,
 When first I leagued with other men,
 And left my open way,
 No power had I to check my course,
 No will to pause or stay.
 They knew that I was proud and bold,
 And foremost still would go,
 Where danger waited in the path,
 Nor ever count the foe.
 And they had read my secret heart,
 And set their cunning snare;
 O, had my only thought been love,
 They'd not have bound me there!

370

380

390

XIV

But there was hatred in my soul;
 And more, that glorious sin,
 Ambition, cursed by all who lose,
 No crime for those who win.

400

What sceptre ever yet was gained
 Without the reddened hand?
 Light penance serves to cleanse the stain
 From those who rule a land.
 Hero, and king, and conqueror—
 So ring the changes here,
 For those who rise by any art,
 No matter what they were!
 Wretch, villain, traitor, regicide—
 These are the counter-names
 For men whom fortune thrusts aside,
 However bold their aims.
 I would not care for vulgar speech;
 But, O, it drives me wild
 To think that cold and reckoning knaves
 Could sway me like a child!
 Tell me no more of guilt and shame!
 'Tis worse to be a fool,
 To play the subtler traitors' game,
 Their partner and their tool!

410

420

XV

'Twas in Craigmillar's dusky hall
 That first I lent my ear
 To that deep tempter, Lethington,
 With Murray bending near.
 The theme was Darnley and his deeds,
 His vain capricious mind,
 That neither counsel could control,
 Nor sense of honour bind;
 His wild outrageous insolence
 To men of high degree,
 Who, but for Mary's love and grace,
 Were better far than he.
 All this I heard, and answered not;
 But when he came to speak
 Of Mary's wrongs, and Mary's woes,
 The blood was in my cheek.
 He told me of her breaking heart,
 Of bitter tears she shed,
 Of the sad cry she raised to heaven,
 'O God! that I were dead!'—
 Of that dull grief which, more than pain,
 Has power to waste and kill;
 Yet in her secret heart, he said,
 Queen Mary loved him still.

430

440

XVI

'Loves him?' 'Why, ay! Our thought was bent,
 At first, on Darnley's banishment;

On loosing of the nuptial tie,
As holy Church allows—
An easy thing, for never yet
Was such a faithless spouse!
But when we broke it to the Queen,
She would not deign to hear;
He was the father of her child,
And so to her was dear.
What then is left? While Darnley lives,
He's nothing less than King;
An insect monarch, if you will,
But yet with power to sting.
Why, even you, brave Earl, so high
In honour and in place,
You—Warden—Admiral—must bend
Before his Royal Grace!
Nay, chafe not at my open speech,
For others feel the wrong:
Great God! to think that one so weak
Should thus defy the strong!
I speak not only for myself—
I speak Lord Murray's mind;
Your brother Huntley, and Argyle,
They will not lag behind.
You know their strength. Yet more remains;
The banished lords are ours—
Lindsay and Morton, were they here,
Would help us with their powers.
In evil hour, in evil cause,
They lent weak Darnley aid;
They trusted to his lying tongue,
And therefore were betrayed.

450

460

470

480

XVII

'Surely 'tis time to stanch the wounds
That vex the land so sore,
To knit the noble brotherhood
More closely than of yore;
To curb the wild fanatic mood
That waxes day by day,
And make the surly preachers know
Their duty, to obey!
But for this brainless, frantic fool,
Our course were plain and clear;
If Scotland's nobles back their Queen,
What danger need they fear?
No more will we of foreign league,
Or foreign wedlock hear!
A better husband for the Queen
We'll find among our own;

490

As fit a champion as the Bruce,
 To fill the Scottish throne!
 More might I say—but, valiant Earl,
 On you our fate depends; 500
 Speak but the word, give but the sign,
 I'll answer for our friends!
 Scotland is weary of the load
 That lies upon her now,
 And Death is breathing, cold and damp,
 Upon our Sovereign's brow.
 Here is the stalwart arm we need
 To save the State and Queen;
 Your own brave blood was freely shed
 For Mary, on the green— 510
 But Darnley's!—for one drop of yours
 His life were all too mean.'

XVIII

I've heard that poison-sprinkled flowers
 Are sweeter in perfume
 Than when, untouched by deadly dew,
 They opened in their bloom;
 I've heard that men, condemned to die,
 Have quaffed the seasoned wine
 With keener relish than the juice
 Of the untampered vine; 520
 I've heard that with the witches' song,
 Though harsh and rude it be,
 There blends a wild mysterious strain
 Of weirdest harmony,
 So that the listener far away
 Must needs approach the ring,
 Where, on the savage Lapland moors,
 The demon chorus sing;
 And I believe the devil's voice
 Sinks deeper in the ear, 530
 Than any whispers sent from heaven,
 However soft and clear.
 Yes! I was cozened, cheated, led—
 No beast more blindly goes
 Towards the shambles, than I went
 When flattered by my foes!
 Flattered—and bribed! Ay, that's the word—
 No need to hide it now—
 Bribed by the proffer of a crown
 To glitter on my brow! 540
 O never let the man of deeds,
 Though strong, and bold, and brave,
 Though he has shaken thrones like reeds,
 Try issue with a knave!

Might is no match for studied craft,
Which makes the best its thrall:
When earth is mined beneath his feet,
The champion needs must fall.

XIX

Now, were a reverend father here—
For such there are, I know, 550
Good men and true, who preach the word,
Without invoking fire and sword
To lay the temples low—
Men who proclaim their mission, peace;
And count it worse than shame
To shed their doctrines forth like oil
Upon a land in flame—
Had I such ghostly counsellor,
He'd tell me straight to throw
All rancorous feelings from my breast; 560
To bless my deadliest foe;
To pray for that same Lethington;
To raise my heart to heaven,
And supplicate that Murray's soul
May not depart unshriven!
Nay—more than that—for Morton's weal
My prayer must also rise:
A proper instrument were I
To lift him to the skies!
The older faith enjoined a mass, 570
A requiem to be said
Above the bier, or for the soul
Of any foeman dead.
That may be priestcraft—idle sound,
As modern preachers say—
A lie, that neither saint in heaven,
Nor guard on hell, obey:
But to forgive them, while they live;
To breathe a prayer for them,
The traitors who have robbed their Queen 580
Of state and diadem—
Have shut her in a lonely isle,
To pine, and waste, and die—
A prayer for villains such as these
Were insult to the sky!

XX

I yielded; for the deed proposed
Was nothing new or strange.
Though ne'er a Lord in Scotland stirred,
My purpose, oath, and secret word
Had known nor check nor change. 590

Men feel by instinct, swift as light,
 The presence of the foe,
 Whom God has marked, in after years,
 To strike the mortal blow;
 The other, though his brand be sheathed
 At banquet or in hall.
 Hath a forebodement of the time
 When one or both must fall.
 That bodement darkened on my soul
 When first I set my eye 600
 On Darnley in his trim attire,
 All youth, and mirth, and hope, and fire,
 A blazoned butterfly.
 Methought I saw, like northern seers
 When shadowed by the cloud,
 Around his pomp and bravery
 The phantom of a shroud!
 It chilled me then, it haunts me now—
 Let this at least be said,
 No thought of slaughter crossed my mind 610
 Till David Riccio bled.
 Then both my heart and hand were freed;
 And often in a dream,
 When, through the corridors of sleep,
 Rang Mary's piercing scream,
 The scene would change from Holyrood
 To some sequestered glen,
 Where I and Darnley met alone,
 Apart from other men.
 How often have we twain been thrown 620
 In death-lock on the sand,
 Eye fixed on eye, breath meeting breath,
 And steel in either hand!
 And I have wakened, panting sore,
 My forehead wet with dew,
 More shaken by the phantom strife
 Than any that was true!

XXI

They prate of murder—'tis a word
 Most odious to the ear,
 Condemned alike by God and man : 630
 But peer may meet with peer.
 If laggard laws delay redress
 For insult or for wrong,
 There is no arbiter like steel
 So ready and so strong.
 Then they contend on equal ground,
 And equal arms they wield;

What does the knight or captain more
Who strikes in tented field?
And—by the sun that shines above!—
Had fate ordained it so,
That I and Darnley might have met,
As foeman meets his foe,
One half my life, when life was prized,
Were ransom all too poor
For one bare hour, 'twixt dawn and mirk,
Of grappling on the moor!

640

XXII

But kings—forsooth, they called him King!—
Are cravens now. They claim
Exemption from the knightly rule,
And skulk behind their name.
They dare not, as in Arthur's days,
When chivalry began,
Tell their accuser that he lies,
And meet him, man to man.
They are not dauntless, like the Bruce,
All Europe's foremost knight.
Aye ready with his stalwart hand
To justify his right—
Not valiant, as was royal James,
Who died on Flodden field.
The best and bravest of his race,
Unknowing how to yield.
They sit behind their silken screens,
Fenced closely by their guard,
Their archers and their bandoleers,
Like women kept in ward.
No reckoning give they for their deeds,
Whatever those may be—
Too high was Darnley in his place
To measure swords with me.
I hold the creed that earthly wrong
On earth must be repaid;
And, if the battle be denied,
And law is drugged, and stupefied,
Why—vengeance comes in aid!

650

660

670

XXIII

'Tis strange what freaks the fancy plays,
When sense is shut by sleep;
How a vague horror thrills the frame,
And awful sounds and deep
Boom on the ear, as if the earth
Moaned in her central caves
Beneath the weight of buried men,
And stirred them in their graves!

680

That night as on my bed I lay,
 The terror passed on me ;
 It wrung my heart, it froze my blood,
 It forced my eyes to see
 The spectral fire upon the hearth,
 The arras' stiffened fold, 690
 The gaunt, mute figures on its web,
 In tarnished silk and gold,—
 All there—no motion—but a step
 Was creaking on the stair ;
 It made me pant, it made me gasp—
 Who was it sought me there ?
 I saw my sword beside the bed,
 I could not stretch my arm—
 I could not stir, I could not cry,
 I lay beneath a charm. 700
 The door swung slowly on its hinge,
 And in a figure came,
 In form and face like Lethington,
 Most like, yet not the same.
 Those were his eyes that glared on mine,
 But in them was a gleam
 That burned like fire into my brain ;
 I felt them in my dream.
 And thus he spoke, in Maitland's voice,
 But deeper far than he :— 710
 'Rise up, Lord Bothwell, from thy bed—
 Rise up, and follow me !'

XXIV

I rose, but not as men arise
 At hasty call or loud ;
 I rose as rigid as a corpse
 Swathed in its burial-shroud.
 Spellbound I stood upon the floor,
 Bereft of power or will,
 For well I knew, where'er he went,
 That I must follow still. 720
 Then up the stair he led the way,
 By winding steps and steep,
 Out to the topmost battlement
 Of old Craigmillar's keep.
 The moon was down, but myriad stars
 Were sparkling in the sky—
 'Behold !' he said, and raised his hand—
 They seemed to wane and die.
 They passed from out the firmament,
 Deep darkness fell around— 730
 Darkness, and horror as of hell,
 And silence most profound.

No wind, no murmur, breath, nor stir,
'Twas utter blankness all,
As though the face of God were hid,
And heaven were wrapped in pall.

XXV

'Behold again!' the deep voice said,
And straight arose a spire
Of lurid, red, and dismal light,
Between me and the mountain height, 740
A peak of wavering fire:
Above it was a kingly crown—
Then sounded in my ear,
'That glorious prize may be thine own!
Nor only that, but honour, power,
Beauty, and love—a matchless dower—
Dominion far and near!
All these await thee, if thy heart
Is tempered like thy steel, 749
Keen, sharp, and strong, and prompt to strike—
To strike, but not to feel!
That crown was won by valiant Bruce,
He gained it by the blow
That on the slippery altar-steps
Laid the Red Comyn low;
He won and wore it as a king.
And thou may'st win it now!'

XXVI

I spoke not, but he heard my thought:—
'Well done, thou dauntless peer!
I love the brave and venturous will 760
That knows nor ruth nor fear!
Come, then, I swear by yonder fire—
A sacred oath to me—
That thou shalt sit in Darnley's place
When Darnley dies by thee!
Away that pageant!'—Spire and crown
Shut, like the lightning's leap;
But overhead a meteor came,
Slow-moving, tingling with its flame
The murky clouds and deep; 770
It shed a glare on Arthur's Seat,
It widened like a shield,
And burst, in thunder and in fire,
Above the Kirk-of-Field.

PART THIRD

I

THAT gaoler hath a savage look—
Methinks I spy a change;
For three long years, within this room,
That man has been my only groom,
And yet his voice is strange.
He brings me food, he smoothes my bed,
Obedient to my sign;
But still his moody eye falls down,
And will not answer mine.
I had the art, in former days, 10
To win, by short familiar phrase,
The rudest hearts alive,—
To bring the wildest to my side,
And force them in the battle-tide
Like thorough fiends to strive.
When Warden, I have rode alone,
Without a single spear to back,
The Marches through, although I knew
That spies were hovering on my track;
I've passed into the midst of clans 20
So fierce and wild, that undismayed
They would have risen, sword in hand,
Had the Queen's standard been displayed;
But never did I meet with one,
Trooper or jackman, groom or knave,
But to the ready fearless call
A frank and fearless answer gave.

II

This fellow scowls as if in hate.
I've marked upon his brow a scar,
More like the hideous galley-brand 30
Than any wound from broil or war.
Either he is, in mind and sense,
Far duller than a Lothian boor,
Or there's a plot against my life,
And he's the man to make it sure!
I never hear him at the door,
When fumbling with his heavy keys,
But something warns me to beware,
Reminding me that sounds like these
Were heard by Rothsay, Scotland's heir, 40
In Falkland's dungeon deep;
When, mad with famine and despair,
He started from his sleep,
To see the butchers usher in
That terrible repast,

The black bull's head, the awful sign
Of death to follow fast !
Slave that he is ! I've strength enough
To brain him at a blow :
But Danish laws, they say, are hard ;
And scarcely might a man in ward
Deal with his gaoler so.
And yet, if treason dares to come
And bare the murderous knife,
Not craven-like nor unavenged
Shall Bothwell yield his life !

50

III

Is this indeed a warning voice
That croaks within my ear ?
Or is it guilt that frames the thought,
And fashions it to fear ?
I'd have it so—I'll so believe !
These terrors are no more
Than the wild blasts that conscience drives ;
And though they shake me sore,
I'll hold them empty, vain, and false,
Nor so demean my place
As tremble at a clown's approach,
Or deign to watch his face !

60

IV

Come—I will far away from hence—
I cannot tarry here :
Whate'er the penance, I must forth,
And quit this dungeon drear !
Man lives not for the single point
That marks the passing time ;
He lives in thoughts and memories
Of glory or of crime.
And I will back—and bravely back,
To that tremendous night
When the whole state of Scotland reeled,
And Darnley took his flight,
Borne on the wings of that red blast,
Whose fell volcano-roar
Shook the dark city to its base,
And bade it sleep no more.
That which I did, nor shrunk to do,
I may at least recall ;
If spectres rise from out the grave,
I dare to face them all !

70

80

V

High mirth there was in Holyrood,
As fitted nuptial scene,

90

For on that day Sebastian wed
 The favourite of the Queen.
 All Scotland's nobles graced the feast,
 And merrily went round the jest,
 Though some had secrets in their breast
 Enough to mar their sport.
 But in a time when all men lied,
 Nor trusted neighbour by their side,
 Deceit was more than justified ;
 And, truly, of that Court,
 I doubt if there was any there
 Who showed in face or mien a care,
 Save Mary. But her cheek was pale,
 Sad was her smile at jest or tale ;
 And though she strove to bear her part.
 She could not so devise,
 But that the anguish of her heart
 Came glistening to her eyes.

100

VI

Yes, when she looked upon the pair
 So fondly placed together there,
 Loving and loved, without a thought
 Beyond their present bliss and joy,
 All hope, all trust, all happiness,
 All faith without alloy,
 I saw her strive to hide her tears—
 I am not gentler than my peers ;
 Nor could I, in the general case,
 Divine why women weep and wail,
 But gazing on Queen Mary's face,
 I saw the cause, and could not fail.
 She thought her of the marriage-feast
 When Darnley was the chosen groom,
 When, trusting to his vows and faith,
 She gave herself, in beauty's bloom.
 When she was radiant as the bride,
 And he was, as the lover, gay ;
 Alas ! there rolled an awful tide
 Between that time and this to-day !
 Short interval ; yet where was he,
 The partner of her bed and throne,
 The chief of all her chivalry ?
 A wretched leper, and alone !
 Stricken, and sick, and ill at ease,
 Worn out with base debaucheries,
 Her lord once more was nigh ;
 Broken in body and in mind—
 A wretch, who paradise resigned,
 To wallow in a sty !

110

120

130

VII

How she endured him, after all
 His foulness and his insolence. 140
 Puzzles my mind—but let it fall!
 God gave to woman gentler sense
 And sweeter temper than to man;
 And she will bear, like penitence,
 A load that makes the other ban.
 Saint-like she tarried by his side,
 And soothed his torment day by day;
 And though her grief she could not hide,
 No anger did her look betray.
 Now, in the midst of mirth and song, 150
 Her loving nature did not yield,
 And every moment seemed too long
 That kept her from the Kirk-of-Field.
 Early she gave the wonted sign
 In token that the feast was done;
 Her place was then by Darnley's bed,
 Till the late revelry begun.
 And I, like her, had counted time,
 And might not longer tarry there;
 For the wild impulse to a crime 160
 Hath all the urgency of despair.
 I knew her errand, and my own!
 I knew them both but far too well—
 Hers was the thorny path to heaven,
 And mine the road that leads to hell!

VIII

Well I remember how my heart
 Beat as I oped the postern-door;
 My foot upon the threshold stayed,
 I scarce had power to venture o'er! 170
 The night was dark; a heavy mist
 Came creeping upward from the sea.—
 'Who waits there? Bolton—Talla—hist!'
 And straight they glided up to me.
 'Is all prepared?—speak soft and low.'
 'All's done; beyond the walls they wait.'
 'And Ormiston, where lingers he?
 He was not wont to be so late.'
 'He tarries for you. But, my Lord,
 Some hidden treachery we dread;
 Two muffled men are on the watch, 180
 They passed us by with stealthy tread.
 No aid has come from Morton yet,
 Despite the promise that he gave;
 I searched the fields and orchard round,
 But all was silent as the grave.'

'Why then, our secret is our own :
 Far better that they are not there.
 As for the twain you speak of—tush !
 Maskers or galliards—never care !
 Give me your hand. Why, Hay, 'tis cold ! 190
 No flinching now ; the die is cast.
 Nay, man ! be resolute and bold ;
 To-morrow, and the danger's past.
 What brave young heart but would be fain
 To share in such a venturous deed ?
 Away then ; let's to Ormiston :
 Tread softly as you go—take heed !'

IX

We found him graithed in steel array—
 O, often yet I think of him !
 The strongest warrior of his day, 200
 A giant both in thews and limb.
 He was my friend, my father's too ;
 But he is dead—nor only he.
 For the black gibbet was the doom
 Of every man who stood by me !
 Well, well ! God sain them—sain them all !
 If what they died for was a crime,
 Death was atonement : for the rest
 I'll answer in the coming time,
 As I must answer.

'Ormiston !'

210

'Welcome, Lord Earl, but not too soon ;
 I've waited here an hour and more,
 And cursed the coming of the moon.
 Thanks to the mist, the Borderer's friend,
 We shall not see her face to-night ;
 I never rode a foray yet
 When I had comfort from her light.
 So Morton has not sent his men ?
 I'm glad on't, Earl ! 'Twere shame, I swear,
 That fifty jackmen should be brought 220
 To see one stripling vault in air.'

X

I stood that night in Darnley's room,
 Above the chamber charged with death ;
 At every sound that rose below
 There was a catching in my breath.
 The aspect of the boy was sad,
 For he was weak, and wrung with pain ;
 Weary he lay upon the bed,
 From which he never rose again.
 I saw his brow so pale and damp, 230
 I saw his cheek so thin and spare—

I've seen it often since in dreams—
O wherefore did I seek him there?
He lay, indeed, a dying man.
His minutes numbered, marked, and spanned;
With every ticking of the clock
There fell a priceless grain of sand.
Yet over him an angel bent,
And soothed his pain, and wiped his brow—
So fair, so kind, so innocent. 240
That all hell's tortures to me now
Could scarce be worse than what I felt
Within that thrice-accursed room!
No heart so hard that will not melt
When love stands weeping o'er the tomb.
O had I hellebore for that—
That one damn'd hour!—I'd count me blest;
So would I banish from my couch
The direst phantom of unrest!

XI

Time trickled on. I knew 'twas done, 250
When Paris entered with the key—
I'd listened for his foot, as one
Upon the rack might hail the tread
Of the grim gaoler of the dead,
Yet loathsome was his face to me!
He looked a murderer; not for hate,
Malice, or wrong, or other cause,
By which the devil, or his mate,
Tempt man to spurn his Maker's laws—
But from that hideous appetite. 260
That lust for blood, that joy in sin,
That shames the instinct of the wolf,
So hellish is the heart within.
Let no man seek to gain his end
By felon means! I never felt
So like a slave, as when he passed,
And touched the key beneath his belt!
For in his glance I read the thought—
'Lord Bothwell! ever from this hour,
Though you be great, and I am nought. 270
Your life and fame are in my power!'
Ah! shame, that I should now recall
The meaner feelings of that time,
The splinters and the accidents
That flash from every deed of crime!
Shame, that a face like his should rise
To gibber at me even now,
To scare me with his hateful eyes,
And beckon from the gulf below!

What recks it how a caitiff ends? 280
 If Murray paid him with a cord,
 Why, let his spectre haunt the friends
 Who did not deem him worth the sword!
 No more of that!—The Queen arose,
 And we, her nobles, stood aloof
 Until she parted from her spouse,
 And then we left the fated roof.

XII

'Back, back to Holyrood! away!'
 Then torches flashed, and yeomen came,
 And round the royal litter closed 290
 A gleaming zone of ruddy flame.
 I have slight memory of that walk—
 Argyle, I think, spoke earnestly
 On state affairs, but of his talk
 Not any word remains with me.
 We came to Holyrood; and soon
 A gush of music filled the hall:
 The dance was set; the long saloon
 Glowed as in time of carnival.
 O hateful to me was the sound. 300
 And doubly hateful was the light!
 I could not bear to look around,
 I longed to plunge into the night.
 A low dull boom was in mine ear,
 A surging as of waters pent;
 And the strained sense refused to hear
 The words of passing merriment.
 What if that Babel should be stilled,
 Smote dumb, by one tremendous knell?
 What if the air above were filled 310
 With clanging from the clocks of hell?
 Yet waited I till all was o'er;
 The bride withdrew, the masque was done:
 And as I left the postern-door,
 Dully the palace bell struck, One!

XIII

I heard a sermon long ago,
 Wherein the preacher strove to show
 That guiltiness in high or low
 Hath the like touch of fear;
 And that the knight who sallies forth, 320
 Bent on an action of unworth,
 Though he be duke or belted earl,
 Feels the same tremor as the churl
 Who steals his neighbour's gear.

I held his words for idle talk,
 And cast them from my view;
 But, in that awful midnight walk,
 I felt the man spake true.

XIV

I heard the echo of my foot,
 As up the Canongate I sped, 330
 Distinct, as though in close pursuit
 Some spy kept even with my tread.
 Or did I run, or did I pause,
 That sound was ever bickering near;
 And though I guessed full well the cause,
 I could not free myself from fear.
 I almost stumbled in the dark
 Upon a houseless, vagrant hound,
 And his sharp snarl, and sudden bark,
 Made my heart leap, and pulses bound. 340
 Wherever there were lights on high,
 Methought there stood some watcher pale—
 Thin shadows seemed to flitter by,
 I heard low voices mourn and wail.
 And I could swear that once I saw
 A phantom gliding by the place
 Where then I stood. I shook with awe—
 The face was like my mother's face,
 When last I saw her on her bier!
 Are there such things? or does the dread 350
 Of coming evil craze our fear,
 And so bring up the sheeted dead?
 I cannot tell. But this I know,
 That rather than endure again
 Such hideous thoughts, I'd fight the foe,
 And reckon with them, blow for blow,
 Though I were one, and they were ten!

XV

I passed beyond the city wall;
 No light there was in hut or bield,
 I scarce could find the narrow lane 360
 That led me to the Kirk-of-Field.
 Three men were speeding from the door;
 They ran against me in the way—
 'Who's that?' 'Tis I!' 'Lord Bothwell? Back,
 Back, back—my Lord! make no delay!
 The doors are locked, the match is lit—
 A moment more, and all is done—
 Let's 'void the ground!' 'He sleeps then sound?'
 'Within that house shall waken none!'

Shortly we paused. I strained my sight 370
 To trace the outline of the pile;
 But neither moon nor stars gave light,
 And so we waited for a while.

XVI

Down came the rain with steady pour,
 It splashed the pools among our feet;
 Each minute seemed in length an hour,
 As each went by, yet uncomplete.
 'Hell! should it fail, our plot is vain!
 Bolton—you have mislaid the light!
 Give me the key—I'll fire the train, 380
 Though I be partner of his flight!
 'Stay, stay, my Lord! you shall not go!
 'Twere madness now to near the place;
 The soldiers' fuses burn but slow;
 Abide, abide a little space!
 There's time enough'—

XVII

He said no more,
 For at the instant flashed the glare,
 And with a hoarse infernal roar
 A blaze went up and filled the air!
 Rafters, and stones, and bodies rose 390
 In one quick gush of blinding flame,
 And down, and down, amidst the dark,
 Hurling on every side they came.
 Surely the devil tarried near,
 To make the blast more fierce and fell,
 For never pealed on human ear
 So dreadful and so dire a knell.
 The heavens took up the earth's dismay,
 The thunder bellowed overhead;
 Steep called to steep. Away, away!— 400
 Then fear fell on me, and I fled;
 For I was dazzled and amazed—
 A fire was flashing in my brain—
 I hasted like a creature crazed,
 Who strives to overrun his pain.
 I took the least-frequented road,
 But even there arose a hum;
 Lights showed in every vile abode,
 And far away I heard the drum.
 Roused was the city, late so still; 410
 Burghers, half clad, ran hurrying by,
 Old crones came forth, and scolded shrill,
 Men shouted challenge and reply.

Yet no one dared to cross my path,
My hand was on my dagger's hilt;
Fear is as terrible as wrath,
And vengeance not more fierce than guilt.
I would have stricken to the heart
Whoever should have stopped me then;
None saw me from the palace part, 420
None saw me enter it again.
Ah! but I heard a whisper pass,
It thrilled me as I reached the door—
'Welcome to thee, the knight that was,
The felon now for evermore!'

PART FOURTH

I

QUEEN Guenever, that lady high,
Loved Lancelot of the Lake,
And sweet Isolde was fain to die
For gentle Tristram's sake:
And aye their story charms the ear,
Despite the taint of shame,
And lordlings list, and ladies hear,
Nor ever think to blame.
Yet Arthur was the goodliest knight 10
Of all the Table Round,
And stout King Marc, in stubborn fight,
Was ever foremost found.
Why is it that the ancient song
Should thus have power to thrill?
That sin, and faithlessness, and wrong,
Should wake emotion still?
Ah! Love, so it be passioned love,
However frail and blind,
Will yet on earth, if not above, 20
A gentle judgment find.

II

In the old tales of chivalry
There lies more truth than priests allow;
Valour, and strength, and courtesy,
Have power to make the haughtiest bow.
The knight who by his single arm
Could free a lady from duress,
And break the fell magician's charm,

Had claim upon her loveliness :
 Although the daughter of a king,
 She might not spurn his homage fair ; 30
 And proud was she in listed ring,
 To see him with her colours there.
 Rare thoughts are these for one disgraced,
 A slave in body, racked in soul !—
 My blazon has been long erased,
 My name struck off the knightly roll !
 But what of that ? The time has been
 When I was highest of the high—
 Yea, was the husband of a Queen ;
 And so they shall not pass me by. 40
 Good men and brave may be forgot,
 The tomb may hide their dust and fame,
 But while there breathes on earth a Scot,
 He'll hear, at least, of Bothwell's name !

III

Yet, when the awful deed was done,
 And Mary's burst of grief was by,
 Of all who stood around the throne,
 Was none in closer trust than I.
 My front was calm, my speech was clear,
 I did not overact my part, 50
 Nor feign a sorrow, too severe,
 For one I never loved at heart :
 Intent I seemed to find and trace
 The bloody authors of the crime ;
 But rumour hath a headlong pace,
 And would not tarry for my time.
 Whispers arose, not loud, but strong,
 That I was privy to the deed ;
 The rabble, when I passed along,
 Regarded me with sullen heed ; 60
 A madman paced the streets by night,
 Invoking vengeance from on high,
 Till the scared women, in affright,
 Believed they heard a spirit cry.
 Each Sabbath-day the pulpits rung
 With texts on murder ill-concealed,
 And pictures on the Cross were hung
 Of him who died at Kirk-of-Field.

IV

My name was bruited.—Well I know
 Who set the bloodhounds on my track ; 70
 But Morton, though my deadliest foe,
 Dared not, as then, to cheer the pack.

Had I been such a knave as he,
 I might at once have eased my breath,
 And made my name for ever free,
 By charging him with Darnley's death.
 Ay, without falsehood in my heart!
 For, when I went at break of day,
 To search the ruins, far apart
 The unscathed corpse of Darnley lay. 80
 No mark of fire was on the dead,
 Unsinged his cloak of velvet fine;
 If he were murdered as he fled,
 It was not done by me or mine!
 And none save Douglas knew the hour
 When the old roof should whirl in air;
 He swore to aid me with his power—
 It may be that his men were there.

V

But rumour is a reckless fire,
 Which, kindled once, is sure to spread, 90
 And, raging in its frantic ire,
 Spares not the living or the dead.
 An ember dropped upon the waste,
 Swells to a blaze that wraps the hill,
 And onward rush the flames in haste,
 Ascending, striding, bickering still;
 They reach the wood, they spare it not,—
 The forest roars and crashes down,—
 The red surge breaks on tower and cot.
 Homestead and village, church and town. 100
 And rumour did not spare a name
 That should have been from tarnish free;
 No saint in heaven was less to blame
 For wretched Darnley's death than she!
 Fling forth a lie amongst the crowd,
 Let but the preachers vouch 'tis true—
 And innocence may buy her shroud,
 And guilt go forth in garments new!
 They said she did not mourn him long—
 What cause had she to mourn at all? 110
 His life had been a course of wrong,
 A hideous shadow on her wall.

VI

Why mourn? Because the man was dead
 Who brought his ruffians to her room.
 And held her struggling, while they shed
 The life-blood of her favourite groom?
 Who trafficked with her darkest foes.
 Heaped insult on her and despite.

Fled from the Court to herd with those
 Whose baseness was his foul delight? 120
 Why, I have heard old Knox protest,
 Men should not mourn for those they love,
 Since earthly mourning is, at best,
 Defiance to the will above.
 He cited David, who arose
 And washed his face and tasted bread,
 Things he omitted, in his woes,
 Until he knew his child was dead.
 And so, because in quietness
 Her secret soul she did possess, 130
 Because she did not feign despair,
 Nor beat her breast, nor rend her hair,
 Nor give superfluous sorrow breath—
 Because no vain and false parade,
 Or frantic show of grief was made,
 They taxed her with her husband's death!

VII

Ha, ha! Their rancour was my shield,
 A buckler between me and shame;
 For what belief could Mary yield
 To miscreants who abused her name? 140
 She, in her perfect innocence,
 Despised the foul insulting lie,
 That, without semblance of pretence,
 Had swollen into a common cry.
 They dared to charge her—her, their Queen—
 With guilt so monstrous of its kind,
 That, granting she had only been
 In knowledge of the deed designed,
 The gates of heaven had shut for aye
 Against her penitence and prayer, 150
 Angels had loathed her in their sky,
 And left her to her soul's despair!

VIII

Yea, men had loathed her! I myself—
 The devil's bondsman, though alive,
 Whom not for charity nor pelf
 The meanest priest that crawls would shrive—
 I would not, though she brought a crown,
 Have ta'en a murderess to my bed;
 The Borgia won such wide renown
 As well might warn a pillowed head!— 160
 But, fie on me, to mix the name
 Of one so tainted and so vile,
 With hers, the pure and spotless Dame
 Who tarries in Lochleven's isle!
 Her noble soul, that knew no taint,

Was far too trusting and sincere;
 She was, in purity, the saint,
 With all that makes the woman dear.
 And when I pass before the Throne,
 To reckon for my deeds on earth;
 When every secret crime is known,
 And every thought that gave them birth;
 I'll answer truly for my Queen,
 What she, in error, did for me;
 And, though a gulf lie broad between,
 I'll vouch her, as an angel, free!

170

IX

Yet who accused me? Not my peers;
 They, one and all, were dumb as death—
 'Twere shame to think that doubts or fears
 Could make them draw a bated breath!
 If some were mingled in the plot,
 And far too well the secret knew,
 Yet more there were who loved me not,
 Brave lords and valiant, tried and true.
 Boyd—Seton—Herries—none stood forth,
 Nor any knight of fame and worth;
 Only old Lennox, half distraught
 With sorrow for his slaughtered son,
 Gave utterance to the people's thought,
 And craved that justice should be done.
 Ready was I to stand the test,
 To bide the sentence of the law;
 Its terrors did not mar my rest,
 Nor make me thrill with guilty awe.
 For Morton stood beside me then,
 And Lethington was with me too,
 And even Murray sent his men,
 To witness that my cause was true.
 Right hastily the ermined lords
 Pronounced me innocent and free:
 And well they might! Four thousand swords
 Were there to make defence for me!
 Then, hardier yet, I caused proclaim—
 If any dared impeach my name,
 Or charge me with a murder stain
 Upon my hand, for Darnley slain,
 So that he were of like degree,
 He had my challenge, fair and free—
 In guarded lists, or open heath,
 I'd meet him as a knight,
 And do stark battle to the death—
 Might God defend the right!

180

190

200

210

X

O liar that I was, and mad,
 In such wild manner to blaspheme!
 Not mine the faith that Morton had,
 Who held salvation but a dream.
 Never I doubted, from the first,
 The judgment of a God on high;
 And if I be by Him accursed,
 I know what waits me when I die. 220
 I will not stupefy my soul—
 Wretch as I am—with false belief;
 Or think that death must close the whole
 Long weary tale of shame and grief.
 How could I hope to win in fight—
 The utterer of so foul a prayer?
 How 'scape the overwhelming might
 I had invoked to crush me there?

XI

Still, no one came to lift my gage;
 The law declared me free from taint. 230
 What cared I for the preachers' rage?
 I let them chafe without restraint.
 The burghers might believe their tale,
 But dared not mutter it again—
 Too many spears from Liddesdale
 Were daily moving in my train.
 On slight pretext the borderer draws,
 But not so quickly sheathes his brand,
 And swords can tame as well as laws,
 They're ever readier to the hand. 240
 Enough for me that I was clear;
 I thought to let the storm pass by;
 For railing soon fatigues the ear,
 When no one will vouchsafe reply.

XII

And I had much to meditate.
 Darnley no longer stopped my way;
 The Queen was free to choose a mate,
 I must not, like a fool, delay.
 For princes, ay, and kings would come
 To sue for favour from her eyes. 250
 And all the craft of France and Rome
 Would work for such a glorious prize.
 Then how could I, a simple peer,
 Whose name was scarce in Europe known,
 Presume to mix or interfere,
 With royal tenders for a throne?

Love levels all! That faith had I:
 Yea, and by heaven, true love was mine,
 Though it was marred by villainy,
 As sullied water tainteth wine! 260
 I knew the legend framed of old,
 And ever to my heart it came—
 He must be desperate and bold
 Who seeks to win a royal dame!

XIII

Yet all unequal was our lot:
 She was a widow, I was wed—
 Poor Lady Jane! I loved her not.
 Yet never wished her with the dead.
 She was a vixen from her birth,
 Ready with tears, of temper keen. 270
 But though she often stirred my mirth,
 She never waked a touch of spleen.
 Divorce was easy. She and I,
 In mutual weariness, could part,
 Without a ceremonial sigh,
 Or fiction of an aching heart.
 But Mary—how would she receive
 A suit so strange and bold as mine?
 Had I but ventured to believe
 That worship at so fair a shrine, 280
 So mutely offered and so long,
 Could not, at least, unnoticed be,
 My courage then had been more strong,
 My speech more unrestrained and free.

XIV

Often I strove to speak my mind,
 As often did I swerve aside;
 For, though her eyes were ever kind,
 She never lost her queenly pride.
 Her nature was too great and high
 To listen to a lover's vows, 290
 Ere on her cheek the tears were dry
 She gave to her departed spouse.
 And therefore, in uncertain mood,
 Aimless, perplexed, I lingered on,
 Until one day, at Holyrood,
 My path was crossed by Lethington.
 He met me with a meaning smile
 That almost deepened to a sneer:
 I knew the man was steeped in wile,
 And yet I thought his words sincere. 300

XV

'Lord Earl,' he said, 'in days of old,
 As I have heard the story told,
 There reigned a king in Lydian land,
 Who had a beauteous wife;
 But kings right seldom understand
 The worth of that which they possess,
 And this weak monarch's shamelessness
 Cost him his crown and life.
 I need not now the tale rehearse,
 For still it lives in minstrel's verse;
 This only shall I say,
 That he who 'venged the lady's wrong
 Was far too wise to tarry long,
 Before he claimed the sway.'

310

XVI

'You speak in riddles!' 'Surely no:
 Methinks my meaning should be clear:
 Look but around—where breathes the foe
 Whose malice you have cause to fear?'
 'Ay, but the Queen! 'Twere doubly base
 For me to press, as yet, my claim;
 To urge her to her own disgrace,
 And taint her honour and her fame.
 I stand suspected; even here
 Men deem me guilty of the sin;
 And though their tongues are bound by fear,
 I know what thoughts they keep within.
 England abhors me. England's Queen
 Detests the man she could not buy:
 Yes! there had less of rancour been,
 Were I a caitiff and a spy!
 Now—say that I advanced my suit,
 And Mary yielded me her hand,
 Would not rebellion start to foot,
 And treason rage throughout the land?
 Her foes could find no better proof
 Of all that slander dares to say,
 And honest men would stand aloof,
 And friends draw from her in dismay!'

320

330

XVII

'Yea—does your foresight reach so far?
 Men deemed, Lord Bothwell, you were born
 Beneath a rash and fiery star
 That ever prompted you to scorn
 All prudent counsel. You have worn
 Right well the mask; but now I see,
 You are as wise in policy'

340

As swift in action—list to me.
 How stand you at the present hour?
 The first in place, the first in power!
 No other noble in the land
 Hath such a wide and strong command. 350
 Singly you might defy them all,
 If they were leagued to work your fall;
 And yet the first and greatest Lords
 Are pledged your honour to maintain,
 And they are ready with their swords
 To prove they did not swear in vain.
 What you have risked for them they know;
 All were approvers of the deed;
 Nor is there one so mean and low
 As leave you in the hour of need,— 360
 So it is now; but who dare say
 To-morrow shall be like to-day?
 A common danger keeps us bound.
 That past, the league will sunder quite,
 New foes will rise as from the ground,
 New perils hover into sight.
 Oh, then take heed, lest, being strong,
 You count too much upon your power;
 Occasion never proffers long.
 It comes and passes in an hour! 370

XVIII

'Truce with thy proverbs, man! they fill
 With sound, and nothing else, mine ear—
 Speak of the Queen, her royal will
 Must surely count for something here?'
 'My Lord—this Scottish crown of ours,
 August and ancient though it be,
 Doth yet confer but stunted powers,
 And is but royal in degree.
 He whom the nobles hail as king
 Becomes the foremost of them all; 380
 He passes first in listed ring,
 In battle, banquet, bower, or hall.
 He leads our armies to the field.
 The laws are his to guard and wield;
 And yet 'tis widely known,
 Without the concert of his peers,
 No Scottish king, these thousand years,
 Hath ever kept the throne.
 Is it not time for concert now?
 The crown is on a woman's brow,
 The people, by the preachers led, 390
 Heap insults on her royal head—
 She stands alone without a mate

On whom her arm might lean—
 Why sleep the guardians of the State?
 Their voice is strong, their powers are great;
 Let them direct the Queen!’

XIX

‘Thanks, Maitland, thanks! I see thy aim—
 By heaven, it shall be done!
 If Scotland’s peers support my claim. 400
 The prize is almost won!
 Ay, and who dare impeach their choice?
 Let me but gain the nobles’ voice!
 About it straight! Let Morton sign,
 Huntley and Cassilis, Crawford too—
 Their fortunes are compact with mine;
 When they stand forward, not a few
 For love, or dread, or shame will join.
 Ruthven will follow, nothing loth:
 Errol, Argyle—I have them both. 410
 And hark’ye—sound the bishops, man!
 Each reverend name is worth a score—
 Place old St. Andrews in the van,
 He’ll bring us Orkney, Ross, and more.
 Not my advancement, friend, alone
 Depends on what we do:
 If Bothwell ever mounts the throne,
 Why, thou shalt prosper too!’

XX

They gave it me—that fatal Band;
 I held their honour in my hand. 420
 Lords, whose great names were widely known
 Ere Malcolm Canmore filled the throne;
 Chieftains, who ruled their broad domains
 As freely as a monarch reigns,
 Around whose banners reared on high
 Would flock our Scottish chivalry;
 Grave prelates, who, in former days,
 Before the Church was rent in twain,
 Had won the people’s worthless praise,
 And bore the crozier not in vain— 430
 The great, the noble, wise, and free,
 They, one and all, were bound to me!
 No miser ever clutched his gold
 More keenly than did I the scroll;
 I conned it over, fold by fold,
 I weighed each name upon the roll.

XXI

‘And now,’ thought I, ‘though fortune change,
 My place is firm, my seat secure;
 Yea, let her, like a falcon, range

In wilful flight o'er moss and moor! 440
 Nothing, I feel, can shake me now;
 The strength of Scotland backs my claim.
 'Tis but the loosing of a vow,
 A parting from a wearied dame;
 A wooing, neither hard nor long,
 For Mary cannot but comply;
 And then—the child was never strong,
 Sickness may smite him, and he'll die—
 Infants die easy—and I reign!
 Ha, ha! Elizabeth may fret. 450
 And Cecil vex his restless brain:
 I'll make them know me better yet!
 For let them dare to disallow
 My claim of right—and, by my head,
 Before a year goes by, they'll trow
 That Bruce has risen from the dead!'

XXII

There was a knocking. 'Sdeath! what fool
 Comes here to interrupt me now?
 Ha! Ormiston, my trusty friend—
 Welcome,—but why that gloomy brow? 460
 Be joyful, man!—all's done, all's sure.'—
 'What's done? you're not her husband yet?'
 'No—but my claim is made secure;
 This Band, to which the Lords have set
 Their names and seals'—'Is like the rest,
 Parchment and ink—I know them well—
 Good faith hath been a stranger guest
 Since Scottish nobles learned to spell.
 Your own brave father woo'd a Queen—
 This Mary's mother. I have seen 470
 The letters written by her hand,
 Far clearer than that doubtful Band,
 With promise, oath, and token too.
 He deemed himself secure, like you;
 Yet died he in a foreign land.
 O, never rest your faith on words;
 Pens are for priests; trust nought but swords!
 Clerks torture language, to conceal
 Their inward thoughts, and cheat the eye;
 There's honesty in naked steel, 480
 It rings too sharply for a lie!'

XXIII

'A cheerful counsellor art thou!
 What next? If nothing worse portend,
 Relax the rigour of thy brow,
 And speak to me as friend with friend.
 Why—still thou lookest stern and strange—

What is it that thou hast to tell?
 'Listen and mark. The Laird of Grange,
 Kirkaldy, whom we know full well
 To be as resolute a knight
 As lives within this Scottish land—
 No better ever ruled a fight,
 No wiser ever held command—
 Accuses you in open day
 Of Darnley's murder!' 'Dares he so?
 And was there none his tongue to stay,
 No hand to deal a dagger-blow?'

490

XXIV

'On even field I would not fear
 To meet Kirkaldy spear to spear;
 But shame it were to touch his life
 Through vassal's dirk or yeoman's knife!
 No idle pampered stripling he—
 A man of mark and dignity!
 He can array, at trumpet-call,
 The Leslie and the Melvilles all;
 Though but a knight of slender strain,
 No Lord can summon such a train.
 The burgher carles who turn aside,
 Or scowl with angry brow,
 When peers and bishops proudly ride,
 To him will bend and bow.
 Ay, and the preachers, who detest
 Whatever soldiers love the best,
 They, who will rail you by the hour,
 Submit to him and own his power:
 He guides their council, wields their will,
 He bids them clamour or be still;
 Of evil omen is the day
 That brings Kirkaldy to the fray!'

500

510

XXV

'So then, that champion of misrule
 Aspires to measure swords with me?
 He comes too late! I were a fool
 To match with one of his degree.
 My challenge stood unanswered long,
 He might have offered when 'twas new;
 I'll not be baited by the throng,
 And bide his knightship's leisure too!'

520

XXVI

'Despise him not; his plans are laid,
 His friends are numbered and arrayed;
 On you alone the taint they throw.
 Nay, hear me out!—'Tis childish now

530

To wince at words—You bear the charge,
 Whilst saintly Morton walks at large;
 He's safe, whoever may prevail,
 Within the Congregation's pale.
 Some scapegoat truly there must be,
 To carry sin, and you are he!
 They have brave watchwords! First, "The Queen"—
 They're wondrous loyal now. I swear—
 And next, "The Prince"; for 'tis foreseen 540
 His babyhood may lack some care.
 The sire's removed, the son survives,
 You're not his foster-father yet;
 There's peril, sir, for infant lives,
 When crowns are on their cradles set!
 So say the people.'

XXVII

'Let them prate!
 The sordid knaves may hoot and groan;
 Not theirs to overrule my fate,
 Or bar my passage to the throne!
 Let twenty knights of greater worth 550
 Than this Kirkaldy venture forth.
 Of what avail would be their stand
 Against the nobles of the land?
 I tell thee, man, their names are here;
 They urge my marriage with the Queen.
 'Hath she consented?' 'No—'tis clear
 Some little space must intervene:
 She has not thrown her weeds aside.'
 'She knows your purpose?' 'She may guess.
 'What! do you count upon a bride 560
 Before her lips have answered, Yes?
 Never spoke I with courtly dame,
 But women are throughout the same;
 The lowest lass in Teviotdale
 That goes a-milking with her pail,
 Is mistress of her heart and hand,
 And will not yield them at command.
 Lovers must bend, and fawn, and sue
 To maids of high or low degree;
 The wooing may be rough, 'tis true, 570
 Yet, nathless, wooing there must be.
 That parchment no assurance gives—
 I see not how it aids your aim.
 You are not free: your Countess lives;
 She may refuse to waive her claim.
 Come now—be frank with me, my Lord!
 Something of statesman's craft I know—
 Who brought you this? for, by my word,
 I hold him less your friend than foe!'

XXVIII

‘Twas Lethington!’ ‘Why, he’s in league 580
 With Morton and Kirkaldy too!
 The busiest spider of intrigue
 That ever simple Scotland knew!
 This web is of his weaving, then?
 We’ll burst it yet! The Queen’s away?’
 ‘She passed with Huntley and his men
 To Stirling Castle yesterday.’
 ‘When comes she back?’ ‘To-morrow.’ ‘Good!
 Now listen—here, in Holyrood,
 You cannot gain the Queen’s consent; 590
 Within a week, the storm, now pent,
 Will break in fury on your head.
 The Commons, by Kirkaldy led,
 Will thunder at the palace gate;
 And, were you innocent as Knox.
 When captured at St. Andrews rocks,
 Your friends must leave you to your fate.

XXIX

‘Be ruled by me—forestall the time!
 Surprise is fair in love or war;
 A little urging is no crime— 600
 Take Mary with you to Dunbar!
 Thanks to the knave who brought me word,
 Kirkaldy set us on our guard:
 We have a thousand horsemen here,
 From Crichton and from Teviotdale,
 Men who were never known to fail,
 All ready, armed with jack and spear.
 Around Dunbar the waters sweep;
 Meet place for meditation lone,
 When he who owns the castle-keep 610
 Is host and lover, both in one!
 Take, too, the Band; it may suffice
 To still some doubts, should such arise
 ‘Twere pity that her Royal Grace
 Saw not that dutiful demand!—
 Now, I have told you all the case;
 Lord Bothwell, will you grasp my hand?
 Nay, never shrink—’tis now too late;
 To-morrow must the deed be done;
 You’ll find me at the western gate, 620
 With all our men equipped, by one.
 I know the road; we’ll meet them there,
 Then hey o’er meadow, heath, and hill!
 Come now, be brave!—All bids us fair—
 Wilt thou do this?’ ‘Your hand—I will!’

PART FIFTH

I

ASCENSION morn! I hear the bells
Ring from the village far away:
How solemnly that music tells
The mystic story of the day!
Fainter and fainter come the chimes,
As though they melted into air,
Like voices of the ancient times,
Like echoes of ascending prayer!
So sweet and gentle sound they yet,
That I, who never bend the knee, 10
Can listen on, and half forget
That heaven's bright door is shut for me.
Ring on, ye bells! Let others throng
Before the blessed rood to pray;
Let them have comfort in the song
That celebrates this holy day.
Ring on for them! I hear you well,
But cannot lift my thoughts on high;
The dreary mists that rise from hell
Come thick between me and the sky! 20

II

O God, I wish that I were dead!
That I had died long, long ago,
With but such sin upon my head
As men of dull temptations know!
We cleave to life, yet never deem
That life may be a curse and snare—
Far better with the dead to dream.
Than wake in torture and despair.
O yes, I can be humble now! 30
Sometimes my mood is stern and wild,
Yet often I must stoop my brow,
And weep as weakly as a child.
Defiance burns within me yet,
But none are near me to defy;
I cannot palter or forget,
Or cheat my conscience with a lie.
I have shed blood, and rued it sore,
Because it was not knightly done;
Yet were that all my guilt—no more—
It well might brook comparison 40
With deeds that, in the preachers' eyes,
Appear a righteous sacrifice.
They own no saints; else, well I ween,
A saint had Norman Leslie been:

Norman, that fiery youth and bold,
 Who forced his way to Beatoun's hold,
 And saw, unmoved, the murderer's knife
 Let out the Primate's throbbing life.
 Though private feud, not holy zeal,
 Set Norman forward with his steel, 50
 Yet his was styled a godly deed,
 Because he made a bishop bleed.
 Witchcraft has charms to daze the sight;
 Strange glamour has religion too:
 It makes the wrong appear the right,
 The false as worthy as the true!
 The ten commandments dwindle down,
 In case of pious need, to nine:
 Murder no more provokes a frown,
 'Tis justified by texts divine! 60

III

Away, away with thoughts like these!
 Take them, ye winds, and whelm them, seas!
 For other memories haunt me. Yes;
 As greater billows drown the less,
 So one dark surge within my breast
 Roars up, and overwhelms the rest.
 It might be foul, it might be wrong
 To slay the man I hated long;
 But O, what mercy from above
 Can he entreat who strikes at love? 70

IV

Methinks I can recall the scene,
 That bright and sunny day;
 The Pentlands in their early green
 Like giant warders lay.
 Upon the bursting woods below
 The pleasant sunbeams fell;
 Far off, one streak of lazy snow
 Yet lingered in a dell.
 The westlin' winds blew soft and sweet,
 The meads were fair to see; 80
 Yet went I not the spring to greet
 Beneath the trysting-tree.

V

For blades were glistening in the light,
 And morions flashing clear:
 A thousand men in armour bright
 Were there with sword and spear.
 A thousand men as brave and stout
 As ever faced a foe,

Or stemmed the roaring battle-rout
 When fiercest in its flow.
 But cold and cheerless was their mien,
 And faint their welcome then:—
 'Why, Ormiston! what sullen fiend
 Hath so possessed the men?
 They look like images in steel,
 Not vassals prompt and true:
 Think you they know or guess the work,
 And will they bear us through?' work,

VI

'Fear not for that! No single knave
 Will fail you at your need;
 Were it to gallows or to grave,
 They'd follow where I lead. 100
 Give but the signal for the south,
 Or 'gainst the townsmen here.
 And, fast enough, from every mouth
 Will burst a deafening cheer!
 Nothing need they but action, sir,
 To make them fierce and fain:
 Last night their blood began to stir;
 'Twas pity to refrain!
 A blow or two on yonder crew 110
 Right well had been bestowed!
 But more anon: the day wears on;
 'Tis time to take the road.
 Hay, bid the trumpets sound the march;
 Go, Bolton, to the van;
 Young Niddrie follows with the rear;
 Set forward, every man!'

VII

'But what hath chanced? The streets are clear;
 I saw no gathering throng;
 No sound of tumult reached my ear, 120
 Now, as I passed along.'
 'O, sir! the Edinburgh folk are wise;
 They know the value of disguise!
 Short warning give they of the fray,
 For they are hounds that do not bay
 Until they tear you down;
 But better are we here to-day
 Abroad, than in the town.
 I knew that danger was at hand,
 But deemed it not so nigh; 130
 Your chance was lost, despite the Band,
 Had this one day gone by!

Kirkaldy's friends have laid their plot :
 They know our purpose well.
 You start—thank God, they ventured not
 To sound St Giles's bell!
 Then had the craftsmen rushed to arms ;
 And ill it were to strive,
 With hampered men, against the swarms 140
 Lodged in yon waspish hive!
 Had Morton joined them with his might,
 Or message come from Mar,
 Why, you and I this self-same night
 Had lodged within Dunbar ;
 Not, as I trust, with royal guest,
 At will to entertain,
 But with some score of beaten rogues,
 Too scared to draw the rein.
 The townsfolk can be dangerous foes, 150
 If roused within their den ;
 And truly, when it comes to blows,
 They bear themselves like men !

VIII

'Last night they tried our troopers' faith ;
 And many a can of ale
 Was emptied to Queen Mary's health
 By lads of Liddesdale.
 Frankly the burghers played the host ;
 And all was merry game.
 Till one gruff elder of the Kirk 160
 Waxed wrathful at your name.
 Short say was his and incomplete,
 A Jardine smote him down ;
 Then, 'midst the brawl, arose the call
 Of 'Douglas for the town !'
 That cry was ready and designed.
 It rung through street, and pealed through wynd,
 But Morton was not there.
 Yet bear it ever in your mind,
 And guard against the stab behind 170
 When Douglas speaks you fair !
 Right glad was I from yonder pack
 Our men unscathed to bring ;
 And, when we ride in triumph back,
 Lord Earl, I'll hail thee King !

IX

'And, by my soul, the hour has come !
 No doubt or tarrying now !
 Mark yonder drifting cloud of dust
 Above the orchard row.

Some thirty spears, not more, are there; 180
 I reckon by their sheen:
 And yonder rides a knight in mail—
 'Tis Huntley with the Queen!
 Ho, sound a halt! Go forward you;
 I'll follow with my band:
 Now, Bothwell, to yourself be true—
 The crown is in your hand!

X

True to myself? False—false as hell,
 And false to all beside!
 Yet what I did was acted well: 190
 The devil was my guide.
 For question left I little space;
 I spurred across the plain:
 I met Queen Mary, face to face,
 And took her palfrey's rein.

XI

'Pardon, my liege, if hot with haste
 I fail in homage due!
 Too precious is the time to waste;
 My care is all for you. 200
 Madam! rebellion rages wide
 Within yon luckless town:
 The craftsmen in tumultuous tide
 To Holyrood sweep down!
 "Fire, fire the chapel!" is their cry;
 "No mass—no mumbled prayer!"
 Hale forth the priests, and let them die:
 Down, down with rank Idolatry!
 Smite, burn, and do not spare!"
 Nay, Madam—never look so pale—
 Your friends are safe. I did not fail 210
 To leave a trusty band,
 Who, if they cannot clear the street,
 Are strong enough for safe retreat;
 And this their strict command—
 To make at least the passage good
 Of all your train from Holyrood.
 To Crichton, my ancestral home,
 Where the false villains dare not come.
 But you, our Lady and our Queen—
 Your safety is my care: 220
 One royal fortress yet remains,
 We'll bring you bravely there.
 I hold your castle of Dunbar.
 The strongest keep equipped for war
 Within the Lothians wide:
 No other place is half so sure;

There shall you rest in peace, secure—

Say, Madam, will you ride?

Short is the space for parley now,

The road beset may be;

But though we hew our passage through. 230

We'll bear your Highness free!

Come, Huntley! we await your word:

What better can be done?

Far is the ride; but yet, my Lord,

There's nearer shelter none.

Safe is that hold from storm or siege.

However wide the war—

'Tis well resolved! My gracious liege,

This night we reach Dunbar.' 240

XII

O wretch, to fashion such a lie!

O slave, to ruin one so fair!

O false to faith and chivalry!

O villain, well may I despair!

Why live I longer, since I know

That prayer and penitence are vain;

Since hope is dead for me below,

And hell can give no ghastlier pain?

Beneath the flags that, day by day,

Return dull echoes to my tread, 250

A grave is hollowed in the clay;

It waits the coming of the dead:

A grave apart, a grave unknown,

A grave of solitude and shame,

Whereon shall lie no sculptured stone

With legend of a warrior's name.

O would it yawn to take me in,

And bind me, soul and body, down!

O could it hide me and my sin,

When the great trumpet-blast is blown! 260

O might one guilty form remain

Unsummoned to that awful crowd,

When all the chiefs of Bothwell's strain

Shall rise from sepulchre and shroud!

How could I meet their stony stare—

How could I see my father's face—

I, the one tainted felon there,

The foul Iscariot of my race?

XIII

I sought her presence in the hall—

Not as a knight prepared to woo,

But like a faltering criminal

Who knows not what to say or do. 270

I told the story once again
Of wide rebellion in the land,
Of clamour raised against her reign,
Of treason by the preachers planned.
I told her that the English Queen
Was bent to drive her from the throne.
That still Elizabeth's aim had been
To rule in Britain's isle, alone. 280
'Madam,' I said, 'though great her power,
Trust me, that woman's craft is vain;
Nor any town, nor any tower,
Shall she usurp on Scottish plain.
Though knaves and hypocrites combine,
Though the old faith be trampled down,
We'll rally round our royal line,
And perish ere they wrong the Crown!

XIV

'But these are not the days of yore,
When duty was a sacred thing, 290
When loyal hearts the people bore,
And priests were subject to the king.
Not now, upon the Sabbath-day,
Are men exhorted to obey,
Nor do they meet to kneel and pray.
Savage and wild the preacher stands,
And imprecates with lifted hands
The wrath of Heaven upon the head
Of all who differ from his creed.
Nor only that; the pulpit rings 300
With lying tales of priests and kings.
Bold in his self-commissioned cause,
The railing rebel spurns the laws,
And bids his hearers bare the sword,
Against their rulers, for the Lord!
O since your father, royal James,
Sighed out his life in Falkland tower,
How many churches, wrapped in flames,
Have witnessed to the spoilers' power!
Yea, even in Iona's isle, 310
That early Bethlehem of the west,
Where, by Columba's stately pile,
The bones of Scotland's monarchs rest,
Such deeds were done, by christened men,
As well might shame the Saracen.
For sacrilegious hands were there
The dead from out their graves to tear,
And scatter to the winds abroad
The relics of the saints of God!

XV

‘And deem not that their rage has passed— 320
 It lives, it burns within them still; .
 Misrule and anarchy will last
 While those wild preachers have their will.
 This new rebellion shows their mood;
 The throne must, like the altar, down:
 The hands that tore away the hood,
 Are eager to profane the Crown!

XVI

But we can stay them in their course;
 Force must be met, and fought by force!
 The nobles who allowed their aid 330
 To help the growing power,
 Shrink from the monster they have made,
 Insatiate to devour.
 Ready are they with heart and hand
 To crush rebellion in the land;
 All private quarrel to forego,
 And league against the common foe.
 Such, Lady, is their full intent,
 And this the token they have sent.
 Behold their names—recorded here 340
 Are those of prelate, statesman, peer.
 The heart of Scotland and its might
 In this great bond of love unite;
 And never more shall treason dare
 To lift its head in open air
 Against a brotherhood so fair!

XVII

‘But, Madam, something they require—
 O that I might from speech refrain!
 Scarce can I utter their desire,
 Or speak a prayer that may be vain! 350
 Yet must I do it. Lady! see—
 With throbbing heart and bended knee,
 Thus low before your royal seat
 I pour my homage at your feet!
 O, by the heaven that spreads above,
 By all that man holds fond and dear!
 I had not dared to tell my love,
 Or breathe that secret in your ear!
 But for the urgency of the time,
 When silence almost is a crime— 360
 But for the danger to the throne,
 James Hepburn to his grave had gone,
 And never knelt as now!
 Nay, gracious Madam—do not rise;

Well can I fathom the surprise
 That shows upon your brow!
 Were I by wild ambition stirred,
 Or moved by selfish aim,
 Then might you spurn my suit preferred,
 Bid me begone, condemned, unheard, 370
 And ever loathe my name.
 Nay more—for frankly will I speak—
 The marriage bonds I wear, though weak,
 Would still have tied my tongue;
 Nor from my heart had friend or priest,
 While life yet ebb'd within my breast,
 This free confession wrung!

XVIII

Silent and still, though pale as death,
 Queen Mary kept her throne.
 But for the heaving of her breath, 380
 She seemed of marble stone.
 Scarce by a gesture did she show
 What thoughts were rushing by.
 O noblest work of God!—how low,
 How mean I felt when grovelling so,
 With every word a lie!
 ‘And can it be,’ at length she said,
 ‘That Bothwell has his Queen betrayed?
 Bothwell, my first and foremost knight—
 Bothwell, whose faith I deemed more bright, 390
 More pure than any spotless gem
 That glitters in my diadem?
 Great God! what guilt of me or mine
 Hath thus provoked thy wrath divine?
 Weary, though short, has been my life;
 For dangers, sickness, murders, strife,
 All the worst woes that man can fear,
 Have thickened round me year by year.
 The smiles of love I scarce had seen
 Ere death removed them from my view; 400
 My realm had scarce received its Queen
 Ere treason’s hideous trumpet blew.
 They whom I sought to make my friends,
 My very kin, proved false to me;
 And now before me Bothwell bends
 In falsehood, not in faith, the knee!
 O sir! was this a knightly deed,
 To wrong a woman in her need,
 When neither help nor friends were nigh,
 And snare her with an odious lie? 410
 False was the tale that brought me here,
 False even as the love you feign;

And doubtless now you hope, through fear,
Your Queen and Mistress to restrain !'

XIX

Stung to the quick, but bolder far,
As men detected ever are,
I answered her again—
'Madam! if I have erred through love,
I look for pardon from above,
And shall not look in vain. 420
True love is prompt, and will not wait
Till chance or hazard ope the gate.
Not mine the arts that gallants own
Who glide and prattle round the throne!
A soldier I, unused to sue,
Or fawn as courtly minions do.
If I am plain and blunt of mood,
My sword is sharp and keen;
And never have I spared my blood
In service of my Queen. 430
Why, Madam, should you speak of fear?
I used no force to bring you here.
This castle is a royal hold;
Above, upon the turret high,
The Ruddy Lion ramps in gold,
True sign of Scotland's majesty.
Safe as in Holyrood you bide
With friends around you and beside,
And here you keep your state.
What if I longed to speak my mind, 440
To tell you what the peers designed—
To plead my cause, however rude,
Where no rash meddler might intrude—
Was that a crime so great?
Ah, Madam, be not so unkind!
If love is hasty, it is blind.
And will not bear to wait.'

XX

Then rose she up; and on her brow
Was stamped the Stuart frown:—
'By all the saints in heaven, I trow
This man would bear me down!
He prates of love, as if my hand
Were but a sworder's prize,
That any ruffian in the land
Might challenge or despise!
What mad ambition prompts you, sir,
To utter this to me?' 450

What word of mine has raised your hopes
 In such a wild degree?
 I gave you trust, because I deemed
 Your honour free from stain;
 I raised you to the highest place
 That subject could attain,
 Because I thought you brave and true.
 And now, forsooth, you dare to woo!
 Are these your thanks for all my grace,
 Is this your knightly vow?
 Fie, Bothwell! hide your perjured face—
 There's falsehood on your brow!

460

XXI

Swift as the adder rears its head
 When trampled by the shepherd's tread,
 Sprang up my pride; for word of scorn
 By me was never tamely borne.
 Like liquid fire through every vein
 The blood rushed burning to my brain;
 All the worst passions of my soul
 Broke out at once beyond control.
 No longer did I feign to woo;
 Pity, remorse, away I threw,
 And, desperate that my aim was seen,
 I, as a rebel, faced my Queen!

470

XXII

'Madam! I sought in gentle guise
 To win your royal ear;
 Since humble speech will not suffice,
 In words unblent with courtesies
 My message shall you hear.
 I speak not for myself alone;
 But for the noblest near your throne.
 Deeply the Lords of Scotland mourn
 The cause of this your grief;
 The fate which left their Queen forlorn,
 And took away their chief.
 But sorrow, though it wring the heart,
 Has limits to its range;
 And duty must resume its part,
 Since even empires change.
 Therefore they pray you, of your grace,
 To put aside the garb of dule,
 And choose some mate of Scottish race
 To aid you in the sovereign rule.
 You need a guardian for your son,
 And they a chief to lead them on.
 There's not a man but will rejoice
 To hail the partner of your choice:

490

500

To him obedience will they yield,
 Him will they follow to the field;
 And deal so strictly with your foes,
 Whether abroad or here,
 That the wide land shall gain repose,
 And good men cease to fear.

510

XXIII

'So say the Lords: and all agree
 To follow and be ruled by me.
 Traced on this parchment are the names
 Of those who own and urge my claims.
 Therefore the suit which you despise
 Seems not so strange to other eyes;
 Nor, Madam, were it safe or wise
 To thwart their wishes now.
 Alone, be sure, you cannot stand:
 Gone is the sceptre's might; the brand
 Must still the tumults of the land,
 And lay rebellion low.

520

Your nobles proffer well and fair;
 They wait your answer to their prayer.
 And now, 'twere best I tell you plain,
 Resistance to that prayer is vain.
 Their will—or, if you think the word
 Too harsh—their counsel must be heard!
 Well know I, Madam, what I do,
 And what awaits me if I fail:
 I stand not here to fawn or sue,
 I came determined to prevail!
 Think not that rashly I provoke
 The sentence and the headsman's stroke!
 Hope not for rescue—none will come;
 As well seek answer from the dumb!

530

XXIV

'Nay, if you doubt me, send and try.
 No harsh or timid gaoler I!
 Your messengers have leave to go
 Where water runs or breezes blow.
 Send forth your summons—warn them all!
 Tell every noble, far and near,
 That Bothwell lured you to his hall,
 And holds you as a captive here.
 Bid Morton come, bid Cassilis arm;
 Call Errol, Caithness, and Argyle;
 Give order for the wide alarm
 To ring through strath and sound o'er isle.
 Call Lethington, your trustiest friend;
 Warn Herries of this rude surprise—

540

550

How many lances will they send!
 Believe me, not a man will rise!
 Bound to my cause is every peer;
 With their consent I brought you here:
 And here your Highness must remain,
 And quell your woman's pride;
 Till from Dunbar a joyous train
 To Holyrood shall ride.
 With Bothwell at your palfrey's rein.
 And you his willing bride!

560

XXV

O tiger heart! that fiercer grew
 With every anguished breath she drew—
 That gloated on her quivering eye,
 And trance of mortal agony!
 O savage beast! most justly driven
 By man from home, by God from heaven!
 What fitter refuge could I have
 Than this neglected lair.
 Where, grovelling o'er my empty grave,
 I yet am free to howl and rave,
 And rend my grizzled hair?
 O well becomes it me to rage
 At crimes of other men,
 To snarl defiance from my cage,
 And antic in my den—
 I, than all others guiltier far,
 So vile, so lost, so mean!
 O fade from heaven, thou evening star,
 I cannot bear thy sheen!

570

XXVI

Hopeless, abandoned to despair,
 What else could Mary do but yield?
 I took her hand—she left it there;
 'Twas cold and white as frost on field.
 I tried to comfort her; a burst
 Of frenzied tears was her reply:
 For ever be the deed accurst
 That forced such witness from her eye!
 Dim as an unregarded lamp,
 Her light of life was on the wane,
 And on her brow was set the stamp
 Of utter misery and pain.
 Like some caged bird that in dismay
 Has fluttered till its strength is gone,
 She had no power to fly away,
 Though wide the prison-door was thrown.

580

590

In vain I strove to wake a smile,
 In vain protested she was free;
 For bitterly she felt the while
 That henceforth she was bound to me!

XXVII

Again I entered Holyrood;
 Not as an unexpected guest,
 But, in the pride of masterhood,
 With haughty eye and princely crest.
 The cannon thundered welcome out;
 The magnates all were there;
 And though I missed the people's shout,
 For them I did not care;
 More trusty than the rabble rout,
 My troopers filled the square!

600

XXVIII

No draught from magic herb or flower
 Is equal to the taste of power!
 Right royally I took my stand,
 With knights and squires on either hand,
 And gave due audience to the ring
 As though I had been born a king!
 More wondrous yet—my altered tone
 Seemed strange or malapert to none.
 With deep respect and visage meek,
 Each civic ruler heard me speak—
 Was proud my mandate to fulfil,
 And bowed obedience to my will.
 But when I turned me to the Peers,
 Something there was that waked my fears
 A guarded, cold, and formal air,
 A staid retent of dignity,
 A studied guise of courtesy,
 Which faithful friends do never wear.
 The greatest nobles did not come
 To bid their Sovereign welcome home,
 Or ratify with cordial hand
 The weighty promise of their Band.
 Why kept they from me at the time
 When most I lacked their aid?
 Was I, whom they had urged to crime,
 Deserted and betrayed?
 Did they but league to tempt me on?
 Were all their vows a lure?
 Even with my foot upon the throne,
 I stood as insecure
 As the rash huntsman on the lake
 When winter slacks its spell,

610

620

630

640

Who feels the ice beneath him quake,
And dreads the treacherous well.

XXIX

Yet not by look, or word, or sign,
Did I my fears betray;
One sole desire and thought was mine,
To haste the wedding-day.
The law, though drowsy in its course,
Gave me, at length, a full divorce.
Nor did the Church refuse its aid,
Though Craig a stern remonstrance made. 650
He was a zealot like the rest,
But far more honest than his kind.
And would not yield, without protest,
A service hateful to his mind.
Warned by the past, I would not wait
Till Mary breathed again.
I did not ask for idle state,
For gathering of the proud and great,
Or pomp of nuptial train. 660
I spoke the word—she made me Duke.
I claimed her hand the self-same day:
And though like aspen-leaf she shook,
And wan and piteous was her look,
She did not answer, Nay!

XXX

All was accomplished. By my side
The Queen of Scotland knelt, a bride.
In face of Holy Kirk, her hand
Was linked with mine in marriage band:
Her lips pronounced the solemn word; 670
I rose, her husband and her lord!
And now, what lacked I more?
Around me thronged the guests to pay
Their duty on the wedding-day:
Proud and elate, I smiled on all
As master in that royal hall.
Scarce had I spoke, when clashing fell
A weapon on the floor:
I trembled, for I knew it well—
The sword that Darnley wore. 680

PART SIXTH

I

O THAT I were a mountaineer.
To dwell among the Highland hills!
To tread the heath, to watch the deer.
Beside the fountains of the rills:

To wander by the lonely lake
 All silent in the evening's glow,
 When, like a phantom, from the brake
 Comes gliding past the stealthy roe—
 Without a thought, without a care,
 Without ambition, pomp, or crime,
 To live a harmless peasant there,
 And die at God's appointed time !
 For O, of what avail are power,
 Wealth, worship—all we seek to win.
 Unless they bring the priceless dower
 Of rest, and hope, and peace within ?

10

II

I had no peace ; if peace it be
 To rest unscared, to wake secure,
 To let the fancy wander free,
 Or dream of pleasant things and pure :
 To take sweet counsel with a friend,
 Or, dearer, with a loving wife,
 And sometimes gladly to unbend
 The strained and weary bow of life.
 Broken and feverish was my sleep,
 For, all night long, within my room
 Methought I heard the murderers creep,
 And voices whisper through the gloom.
 Nor, when the ghastly night was o'er,
 Content or respite did I win ;
 For guilt stood sentry at the door,
 And challenged all who ventured in.
 In fear I slept ; in fear I woke ;
 In fear I lingered out the day ;
 Whatever lord or courtier spoke,
 I thought was uttered to betray.
 I had no friends, save those whose fate
 A common danger linked with mine—
 Men who provoked the people's hate,
 And roared, like ruffians, o'er their wine.
 The burghers heard the noisy brawl
 That scared the swallows from their eaves,
 And mourned that Scotland's royal hall
 Should thus be made a den of thieves.

20

30

40

III

I had a wife—a fair one too—
 But love I durst not even name !
 I kept aloof, for why renew
 The memory of my sin and shame ?
 She was my hostage, not my bride ;
 Enough it was for me to know

50

She could not sever from my side,
 Nor yet unsay the marriage-vow.
 O these were not my thoughts of yore.
 When, free from fell ambition's taint,
 I worshipped, as I knelt before
 The queen, the woman, and the saint!
 My hand had torn the wings of love.
 Profaned its temple, soiled its shrine;
 No pardon here, nor yet above,
 Could granted be to guilt like mine!

60

IV

Pardon! I sought it not from men;
 I would not take it at their hand;
 I owned no judge, no master then;
 I was the lord within the land.
 Pardon! the word was made for slaves.
 Not for a Sovereign Prince like me:
 Lost is the man who pardon craves
 From any baser in degree.
 There is a peak of guilt so high,
 That those who reach it stand above
 The sweep of dull humanity,
 The trail of passion and of love.
 The lower clouds that dim the heaven,
 Touch not the mountain's hoary crown,
 And on the summit, thunder-riven,
 God's lightning only smites them down

70

V

O for a war to make me freed!
 Had England but denied my claim,
 And sent an army o'er the Tweed
 To wrap the Border braes in flame—
 Then Scotland would have risen indeed,
 And followed me, if but for shame!
 I might have met the foe in field,
 And raised the Hepburn's name so high,
 That none thereafter on my shield
 Could trace the bend of infamy.
 I might have won the people's heart,
 For all men love the stalwart arm;
 And valour triumphs over art,
 As faith defies a wizard's charm.
 Once victor o'er my country's foes,
 What lord in Scotland durst oppose
 Her champion's rights, or mutter shame
 Against my newly-gilded name?
 Nor to the preachers had I turned
 Disdainful ear. I never spurned

80

90

Their doctrines, though I did not care,
 And knew not what those doctrines were.
 In truth, I thought the time had come
 When every state in Europe wide
 Should clear itself from bonds of Rome ;
 And let the Pontiff, deified,
 Deal with the candle, book, and bell,
 In any way that pleased him well.

100

VI

But England moved not. England lay,
 As doth the lion in the brake,
 When waiting for some noble prey,
 With ear intent, and eye awake :
 I. like a wretched mongrel cur,
 Might safely pass his couch before ;
 Not for my snarling would he stir—
 I was not worth the lion's roar !
 The courtiers left me ; one by one,
 Like shadows did they glide away :
 My old confederates all were gone—
 Why should the fortune-hunters stay ?

110

VII

There was dead silence for a space :
 A hush, as deep and still
 As on the lowly valley lies,
 When clouds, surcharged with lightning, rise,
 And loom along the hill.
 Then with a rush, the rumours came
 Of gatherings near at hand,
 Where nobles, knights, and chiefs of fame,
 Were arming in the Prince's name,
 To drive me from the land !
 And straightway through the city rose
 The low and angry hum,
 That tells of keen and bitter foes
 Who cluster ere they come.
 Post after post rode clattering in,
 Loud rung the court with soldiers' din ;
 For Bolton at the first alarm
 Bade all the troopers rise and arm.

121

130

VIII

Aroused as if by trumpet-call,
 I felt my spirit bound ;
 No longer pent in hateful hall.
 Now must I forth to fight or fall,
 With men-at-arms around !
 I cared not what the scouts might bring—
 I hungered for the strife ;

140

When victor, I must reign as King;
 If vanquished, yield my life.
 With spear in rest, and visor down,
 'Twas but one swift career—
 A glorious grave, or else a crown—
 The sceptre, or the bier!
 Aha! there was no tarrying then!
 For prance of steed, and tramp of men,
 And clash of arms, and hasty call,
 Were heard in court, and street, and hall.
 Each trooper drew a heartier breath.
 And keener glowed his eye;
 I knew that from the field of death
 No man of mine would fly!

150

IX

'Give me your hand, brave Ormiston!
 My father loved you dear!
 Not better than you love his son—
 For since the day that I could run,
 Or shake a mimic spear,
 You were my guardian and my guide.
 And never parted from my side
 In danger, doubt, or fear.
 There's comfort in thy hearty grasp:
 By heaven, it is an honest hand!
 I'd rather hold it in my clasp,
 Than any noble's in the land.
 Henceforward must I stand alone,
 Or only lean on friends like thee;
 Of all the caitiff Lords, not one
 Is here to strike a blow for me!
 But let it pass—we'll match them yet!
 The star of Bothwell hath not set;
 Nor will it pale its royal light,
 For traitor's craft or foeman's might.
 I'll hold account for every deed,
 From this momentous hour;
 And those who fail me in my need
 Shall feel me in my power!

150

170

X

'Now then; what news?' 'This much I learn.
 That Morton, Atholl, and Glencairn,
 Lindsay and Home, Kirkaldy, Mar,
 Drumlanrig, Cessford, raise the war.
 They've drawn to Stirling. What their force.
 Our scouts could hardly tell;
 Enow there are of man and horse.
 To fence a battle well.'

181

'Morton! art sure? Is Morton there?
 Ah, then I have him in the snare!
 If it be mine, but once, to tread
 Victorious on a field of dead,
 I'll have that perjured villain's head!
 Atholl? It is a monstrous sign,
 When Atholl and Glencairn combine!
 Who could have brought the friend of Rome
 To beard me, from his Highland home?
 Ah, now I see it! Lethington,
 That arch-dissembler, stirs him on;
 My evil genius still was he—
 Fool that I was to set him free!
 A dungeon in yon fortress grim
 Had been the fittest place for him.
 So then! The masks are thrown away,
 Confessed is every foe;
 And boldly to the battle fray,
 With lighter hearts we'll go.
 But there's a danger near at hand,
 A snake to crush or kill!
 What hear'st thou of the City band?
 The craftsmen—hide they still?'

190

200

210

XI

'If I have read their faces right,
 My life on't, they will rise to-night!
 The booths are closed, the windows barred;
 In every street patrols a guard.
 The rogues are restless; by and by,
 They'll all come swarming here:
 'Twere best to flit, though not to fly,
 Whilst yet the road is clear.
 I am not wont to shun a fray,
 And seldom give a faint advice,
 But this most frankly do I say—
 I'd rather ride the Teviot thrice,
 When rolling in its heaviest flood,
 Than meet that rascal multitude!
 Give me an open field without,
 And then, with fifty men,
 I'd drive, like chaff, the rabble rout
 Back to their smoky den.
 We dare not venture, for their guard,
 What force these walls require;
 And shame it were, if, in our ward,
 The Palace sunk in fire!
 Away then, Duke! and warn the Queen:
 Doubtless her Grace will gladly ride!

220

230

Her presence must be plainly seen.
 To bring the faithful to our side.
 Were all the Border chieftains true.
 I'd care not what the rest might do.
 I knew that soon the strife must come—
 That stout Kirkaldy would not sleep.
 Nor Morton tarry in his keep—
 But this revolt of Ker and Home
 Hath changed the aspect of the war:
 Therefore let's forth without delay.
 Our trysting-place shall be Dunbar,
 With Borthwick on the way.'

240

XII

I know not why: but o'er my soul,
 That eve, the self-same bodement stole
 That thrilled me with a sad presage
 When last I gazed on Hermitage.
 The troopers in procession wound.
 Along the slant and broken ground.
 Beneath old Arthur's lion-hill.
 The Queen went onward with her train
 I rode not by her palfrey's rein.
 But lingered at the tiny rill
 That flows from Anton's fane.
 Red was the sky; but Holyrood
 In dusk and sullen grandeur stood.
 It seemed as though the setting sun
 Refused to lend it light,
 So cheerless was its look, and dun,
 While all above was bright.
 Black in the glare rose spire and vane,
 No lustre streamed from window-pane;
 But, as I stood, the Abbey bell
 Tolled out, with such a dismal knell
 As smites with awe the shuddering crowd,
 When a king's folded in his shroud—
 Methought it said, Farewell!

250

260

270

XIII

So passed we on. The month was June:
 We did not need the lady moon
 To light us onwards on our way
 Through thickets white with hawthorn spray.
 Past old Dalhousie's stately tower,
 Up the lone Esk, across the moor,
 By many a hamlet, many a spring,
 By holt, and knowe, and fairy ring,
 By many a noted trysting-place,
 We held our course, nor slack'd our pace,

280

Till far away beyond the road
 The lights in Borthwick Castle showed.
 Short tarrying had we there, I ween!
 Again we sought the woodlands green;
 For fiery Home was on our track,
 With thousand spearmen at his back:
 Nor dared we rest, till from Dunbar
 I gave the signal for the war.

XIV

By heaven, it was a glorious sight,
 When the sun started from the sea,
 And in the vivid morning light 290
 The long blue waves were rolling free!
 But little time had I to gaze
 Upon the ocean's kindling face,
 Or mark the breakers in the bay—
 For other thoughts were mine that day.
 I stood upon the topmost tower:
 From wood, and shaw, and brake, and bower,
 I heard the trumpet's blithesome sound,
 I heard the tuck of drum; 300
 And, bearing for the castle mound,
 I saw the squadrons come.
 Each Baron, sheathed from head to heel
 In splendid panoply of steel,
 Rode stalwartly before his band,
 The bravest yeomen of the land.
 There were the pennons that in fight
 Had flashed across the Southron's sight—
 There were the spears that bore the brunt,
 And bristled in the battle's front 310
 On many a bloody day—
 The swords, that through the hostile press,
 When steeds were plunging masterless,
 Had hewn their desperate way!
 O gallant hearts! what joy to ride,
 Your lord and leader, prince and guide,
 With you around me, and beside,
 But once in battle fray!

XV

Brief counsel held we in the hall:
 Ready for fight seemed one and all.
 Though somewhat I was chafed to bear 320
 But cold regard from knight and peer.
 I was the husband of their Queen:
 Not less, nor more. Old Seton's mien
 Was haughty, grave—no frankness there.
 With his long beard, and lyart hair,

His heavy mantle o'er him thrown,
 He looked an effigy of stone.
 He must be in his grave ere now,
 And so I will not speak him wrong; 330
 But, then, the hardness of his brow
 Was more than I could suffer long.
 He was a noble of a stamp
 Whereof this age hath witnessed few;
 Men who came duly to the camp.
 Whene'er the Royal trumpet blew.
 Blunt tenure lords, who deemed the Crown
 As sacred as the Holy Tree.
 And laid their lives and fortunes down,
 Not caring what the cause might be. 340
 Such chiefs were they who held the fight,
 And strove, and would not yield,
 Till rushed from heaven the stars of night
 O'er Flodden's cumbered field.
 Spare were his words, his greeting cold,
 His look more distant than of old.
 But that 'twere madness to offend
 The simplest knight that seemed a friend;
 But that my men were few—
 I would have made Lord Seton know 350
 That not a peer should slight me so,
 Or fail in reverence due!

XVI

And Mary—what did she the while?
 Alas, she never showed a smile!
 I dared not ask her to appear
 Within the castle hall.
 Her champions and her knights to cheer—
 She might have hailed them with a tear,
 Or breathed a word in Seton's ear,
 That would have wrought my fall. 360
 She loathed her bondage—that I knew.
 What is it woman will not do
 To free herself from thrall?
 She, daughter of a race of kings,
 Instinct with that desire
 Which makes the eagle beat its wings
 Against the prison wire—
 She, wronged, insulted, and betrayed,
 Might she not claim her vassals' aid?
 Conjure them by their oath and vows 370
 To bear her from her hated spouse,
 And, in the face of heaven, proclaim
 My guilt, my treason, and my shame?

They asked not, in her secret bower,
The wearied Queen to see;
I took, by right, the husband's power,
And none dared question me.

XVII

Another morn—another day!—
And what, ere dusk, was I?
A fugitive, a castaway,
A recreant knight who did not stay 380
On battle-field to die!
Curs'd be the hands that held me back
When death lay ready in my track,
Curs'd be the slaves who turned my rein
And forced me panting from the plain!—
O boaster, liar, murderer—worse,
Traitor and felon—hold thy curse!
Curse not, for lost though others be,
There's none so deep debased as thee! 390
A murderer may be strong of heart,
A liar act a warrior's part,
A traitor may be bold and brave,
A felon fearless at the grave—
Branded, condemned, of fame bereft,
The courage of a man is left.
But coward—O that sickening sound!
Great God! To pass without a wound,
Without one shivered spear or blow,
From such a field, from such a foe, 400
To lose a Queen and kingdom so—
To tremble, shrink, and vilely fly—
It was not I!—it was not I!

XVIII

O breeze! that blowest from the west,
O'er that dear land I loved the best—
Breathe on my temples, cool my brow,
And keep the madness from me now!
Blood seems to rankle in my eyes,
Red as a furnace glare the skies;
And all things waver up and down,
Like shadows in a burning town. 410
There's hellish laughter in mine ear—
More air—more air! I stifle here!

XIX

Devil! thou shalt not yet prevail;
Before thy face I will not quail!
I fled—Do brave men never fly?
I am no coward—'tis a lie!

I stood upon Carberry's height,
 Eager, intent, resolved to fight,
 Ay, to the death, as seems a knight!
 Down on the plain, beyond the hill,
 The foe were motionless and still.
 Why tarried so the rebel lords?
 Were we not ready with our swords?
 They came not on with shield and targe,
 And lances levelled for the charge;
 But safe in summer ambush lay,
 Like children on a holiday.

420

XX

I sent a challenge to their van—
 The Laird of Grange that challenge bore,
 I spared his life an hour before—
 I bade them choose their bravest man,
 My equal in degree;
 So that we two alone might try
 The cast for death or victory,
 And all the rest go free.
 No braggart speech was that of mine.
 My blood had flowed, ere then, like wine,
 In fiercer combat and more fell
 Than any Scottish peer could tell.
 I, who had laid John Elliot low,
 Need scarce have feared another foe!

430

440

XXI

Rare answer to my call they gave—
 O they were noble hearts and brave!
 First, Tullibardine offered fight.
 He was at best a simple knight.
 Without a claim, without a right
 To meet a prince like me.
 He was no mate in camp or hall;
 I stood not there to fight with all.
 Whatever their degree,
 'I dare not then,' Kirkaldy said.
 To take this quarrel on my head.
 If Tullibardine ranks too low
 To hold your challenge as a foe,
 No better claim have I.
 Yet, would the Duke of Orkney deign
 To meet me yonder on the plain.
 And there his fortune try.
 I cannot think that any stain
 Upon his name would lie.
 It has been mine, ere now, to ride
 In battle front by Princes' side:

450

460

With Egmont I have broke a lance,
Charged with the Constable of France—

Then Ormiston broke in :—

What needs this vaunting? Wherefore tell
A story that we know full well?

If never Scot did win

More fame than you in fields abroad,

Where better men, I think, have trod,

470

How stand you here to-day?

A traitor to your Queen and God,

A knave in knight's array!

Aha! you startle at the word—

Here am I ready, with my sword,

To prove it, if you dare!

I am your equal—will you fight?

I stand in arms for Mary's right—

Do this, and I'll believe you quite,

480

Rank boaster though you are!

XXII

Grimly his foe Kirkaldy eyed,

And heavy breath he drew;

Clenched was his hand as he replied,

For sharp the taunt, and true.

Thou hast the vantage—that I feel!

Thy wit hath mastered mine:

I came not here to prove my steel

On ruffian crests like thine!

Yet just, in part, is thy rebuke,

490

So much I yield to thee—

I was in fault to urge the Duke,

As now thou urgest me.

But not by jeer or ribald word

Canst thou so far prevail,

As tempt me now to draw my sword,

Far less return thy rail.

I will not meet a murderer, sir,

For such, I ween, art thou!

So la! Here is a goodly stir,

500

And tender conscience too!

John Knox has done his duty well,

His pupil's apt and fain!

When holy Kirk rings out the bell,

Her saints must needs refrain.

Hearken, sir knight! for all your boast,

For all your foreign pride,

Your place is humble in the host,

And more—you stand defied!

I fling the lie into your teeth,

510

The scorn upon your head!

Say, was that sword within its sheath,
 When priestly Beatoun bled?
 Murder, indeed! Pluck off your glove,
 Lift up your hand on high—
 Swear, in the face of heaven above,
 You're sackless—then I lie!

XXIII

'Hold, sirs!' I said, 'and list to me.
 Your quarrel well can wait:
 Since present combat may not be,
 Forbear this rude debate! 530
 Unanswered is my challenge still
 By those to whom 'twas borne,
 If you, Kirkaldy, spoke my will—
 Is that from fear or scorn?
 Your offer, sir, was mere pretext!
 Doubtless some squire would venture next:
 Or some stark yeoman of your band
 Would crave to meet me, hand to hand!
 Go—say to Morton and to Mar, 535
 I strained my courtesy too far,
 In that I sent my battle-gage
 To every rebel peer.
 Perchance their prudence cools their rage.
 Or else they did not hear!
 Brave leaders have you, Laird of Grange—
 I wish you joy, Sir, of the change!
 Here might I tarry for a week,
 And never find a foe.
 The friends in France of whom you speak 540
 Had scarcely lingered so!

XXIV

'Go back—and tell them I revoke
 The general challenge that I spoke.
 Say that I now demand the right,
 Open to every peer and knight,
 To call his equal to the field.
 Say, that I smite on Morton's shield!
 If he refuse, through Europe wide
 I'll brand him as a recreant knave—
 If he comes forth, the quarrel's tried, 550
 For one or both shall find a grave.
 And now, God speed you! go your way:
 I have no other word to say.

XXV

Glad was I when he turned his steed,
 And slowly paced towards the mead,

Where, round a standard, whose device
 I could not scan so far,
 Lay stretched in sluggards' paradise,
 The leaders of the war.
 Yet throbb'd my heart, for well I knew 560
 A cursed chance had been,
 While I was forth the field to view,
 Kirkaldy met the Queen!
 And fear came on me, as the blight
 Of fever shakes the frame,
 I could not guide my thoughts aright,
 My blood was hot as flame.
 But in his mail writhed Ormiston,
 As writhes in storm the oak,
 And twice I heard his angry groan 570
 Ere yet a word I spoke.
 'What answer on the rebels' part
 Will yon Kirkaldy bear?'
 'An answer that will freeze your heart,
 And drive you to despair!'

XXVI

'Yonder, unscathed, triumphant, goes
 The only man I dread!
 What madness made you interpose,
 When he was ready-ripe for blows,
 And I could strike him dead? 580
 He takes a secret to their camp,
 Is worth your life and mine,
 My hand was up to break the lamp,
 But you will have it shine!
 Ay! and forsooth, you must display
 Your idle chivalry to-day!
 You'd fight with Morton? Easy boast!
 He will not fight with you.
 Why, you proclaim your fortune lost—
 You tell them that you doubt your host; 590
 For, if that host were true,
 No warlike leader, ever known,
 From the arch-angel Michael, down
 To the poor Laird with twenty spears,
 Would so dishonour his compeers!
 And they are faint: and fainter still
 You'll find them at the dawn,
 If sets the sun behind the hill
 Ere yet the swords are drawn.
 Hark you—one only chance is ours!
 Let me, this instant, form our powers. 600
 The Border lances will not fail,

Though all the rest remain;
 I'll to the bands of Liddesdale,
 And lead them to the plain.
 Bide where you are, or seek the Queen:
 Leave all the charge to me,
 And desperate work upon the green,
 Within the hour, you'll see!
 Come, Duke—the signal! Let me go,
 And, by my father's head,
 I'll bring you bound your deadliest foe,
 Or leave him yonder, dead!'

610

XXVII

'I cannot do it—for my word
 Is pledged; I needs must wait.'
 'You? Are we nothing here, my Lord?
 You are not yet so great.
 That valiant men should lay their lives
 At your commandment down.
 Sir—had you twenty royal wives,
 You never wore the crown!
 I have some reverence for my neck,
 And will not risk it at your beck!
 Hearken! You know my way of old—
 Best is the truth when bluntly told.
 Your life and mine are now at stake.
 There's but one game to play;
 One charge is all that we can make.
 And that I'll make to-day!
 Nay, if you wish it, come with me,
 Together let us ride;
 No franker hand, so it were free,
 I'd welcome to my side.
 Better to die with helm on head,
 Than mount a scaffold grim—
 Why—you are paler than the dead,
 You shake in every limb!
 Are you the man who went so far
 At Kirk-of-Field, and at Dunbar,
 And shrink you from the face of war?
 Why stand you here as on parade?
 By heaven—I think the Duke's afraid!
 If it be so, then fare you well!
 Now, shall we onwards go?
 Each minute is a passing-bell—
 'Sdeath! answer, yes or no!'

620

630

640

XXVIII

'I tarry here!' 'God help thee then—
 I'll see thy face no more!

Like water spilt upon the plain,
 Not to be gathered up again, 650
 Is the old love I bore.
 Best I forget thee, Bothwell! Yet
 'Tis not so easy to forget;
 For, at the latest hour, I see
 I've tynd a life by following thee.
 Friends, fortune, fame, a crown are lost,
 By you, the captain of a host,
 The host is standing idly there,
 And not a single blade is bare!
 Saint Andrew! what a scurvy tale 660
 To carry back to Teviotdale!
 Farewell, thou poor inconstant lord—
 Farewell—it is my latest word!

XXIX

He parted like a flash of fire;
 He vanished o'er the hill;
 My friend, the follower of my sire,
 The man I trusted still!
 What spell was on me, that I stayed,
 Nor tried the chance of war?
 Ah—she, the injured and betrayed, 670
 The captive of Dunbar—
 I did not dare to face her then,
 Before Lord Seton and his men!
 But, from the plain, a trumpet call
 Came ringing, sharp and clear;
 Up flew the knightly pennons all,
 Up rose, in clumps, the spear.
 And hastily each leader went,
 To marshal forth his band;
 And steeds neighed fiercely, to the scent 680
 Of battle near at hand.
 Then, from their ranks, Kirkaldy came,
 To me he wended slow;—
 O, I could slay myself for shame,
 As I recall it now!—
 There was no vaunting in his look:
 The man was brave as bold;
 His eye was like a priest's rebuke,
 So calm it was and cold.

XXX

'Now, sir—will Morton forward stand,
 Or does he shun me still?' 690
 Aloft Kirkaldy raised his hand,
 And pointed to the hill.

'Nay! look, my lord, to yonder height,
 And mark the tumult there;
 Is it for combat or for flight,
 Those broken bands prepare?
 An ancient soldier, well I know
 Each move on battle-plain:
 Though firm their front an hour ago.
 They'll never knit again!
 There go the men from Teviot-side!
 They do not fly from fear.
 See—o'er the edge the troopers ride;
 How quick they disappear!
 Now Liddesdale, your surest stay,
 Is turning—Duke, you groan!
 Whose ensign is it they display?
 Look there—it is your own!'

720
 720

XXXI

Yes! every word he spoke was true;
 My cause was lost, and that I knew;
 Yet haughtily I said—
 'My challenge, sir! Do you forget
 That Morton hath not answered yet?'
 Kirkaldy bowed his head.
 'Take this for answer—not for feud
 Or chivalrous display,
 Shall any drop of Scottish blood
 Be wagered here to-day!
 Forego this dream of idle strife,
 Black Death is hovering near;
 O sir, you dally with your life
 By longer tarrying here!
 I love you not; but loth were I.
 Whate'er your deeds have been,
 To see a Scottish noble die
 A death of shame and infamy;
 And more, because he stood so high,
 The husband of my Queen!
 Take counsel from a foe—beware!
 Fly, sir, while yet you can.
 Attainted and proscribed you are,
 A tried and sentenced man!
 And swift and hasty be your flight;
 For, if you spur not, while the night
 Can shroud you with its gloom,
 You die—but not in noble fight;
 The scaffold is your doom!
 Come then with me: while I am here,
 No sudden onset need you fear.

710

720

730

740

I seek the Queen. Belike, once more,
 You would behold her face:
 Then, far away from Scotland's shore,
 Depart—God give you grace!

XXXII

Had the earth yawned, the thunder crashed,
 Or had the bolts of lightning flashed,
 And right before me broke;
 I had not felt more deep abashed
 Than when Kirkaldy spoke.
 I went—God help me, how I went!—
 A culprit up to Mary's tent:
 No eyes were fixed on me.
 All looked upon the Laird of Grange,
 As if, throughout broad Scotland's range,
 Was none so great as he.

750

XXXIII

There was more life in Mary's face,
 A higher dignity and grace,
 Than I had marked for many a day.
 Behind her, in their steel array,
 Seton and Yester gravely stood:
 Their presence boded little good,
 No love for me had they.
 And none were there, with kindly grasp,
 My hand within their own to clasp;
 No voice to whisper in my ear
 That hope was yet alive;
 No friend to bid me cope with fear,
 And still with fortune strive.
 I might have conquered—who can tell?
 I might have kept mine own:
 O Ormiston—it was not well
 To leave me thus alone!

760

770

XXXIV

Before the Queen Kirkaldy bent,
 And graciously she said:—
 'Now, speak, Sir Knight; with what intent
 Is yonder host arraved?
 What seek my Lords?' Then answered he,
 They come to set your Highness free!
 Your pardon—though the Duke be here,
 I must speak boldly on.
 They hold him as a traitor peer,
 To you and to your son—
 Then burst my wrath;—Dare they deny
 The solemn Band they gave?

780

By heaven, such weight of infamy
 Should sink them to the grave!
 Did they not say that I alone
 Was the fit man to guard the throne?
 Who claimed for me my Sovereign's hand?
 Have faith and honour left the land?

79c

XXXV

'Your pardon, Duke!' Kirkaldy said,
 'Not of the Band is question made,
 But did you not, by force of war,
 Convey her Highness to Dunbar?
 My gracious Liege! The Peers invite
 Your Highness to return this night
 To Holyrood, your royal home,
 And to escort you there, they come.
 Not against you shall Scottish swords
 E'er glitter in the sun.
 This message bear I from the Lords;
 And now my task is done.'

80c

XXXVI

Not once did Mary's eye and mine
 Encounter while he spoke.
 I felt it as a dismal sign:
 The daughter of the Stuart line
 Would not endure the yoke!
 'My answer, sir,' she said, 'depends
 Upon the temper of your friends.
 Plainly—their purpose with the Duke?
 Mark this, that when his hand I took
 And spake the solemn vows,
 I lost my freedom to rebuke;
 I owned him as my spouse.
 If, for my sake, the Lords appear,
 The right is mine to dictate here.
 My husband shall not brook the shame
 Of trial and disgrace;
 I will not so demean my name,
 Or so belie my race,
 As let my subjects venge my wrong.
 Whatever wrong there be.
 Thanks be to God, I yet am strong
 Through those brave Lords you see!
 Good sir! your course has upright been,
 Your honour all allow—
 Pray you, deal frankly with your Queen
 Who asks a service now.
 Set free the path, your host restrain;
 And by your knighthood swear.

81c

82c

83c

That not a man shall quit his train,
 Ere I pass downward to the plain,
 And greet my nobles there,
 'So shall it be,' Kirkaldy said;
 'For that I pledge my life, my head!
 Free is the Duke to pass from hence,
 Without molest, without offence,
 With all his following, all his power,
 So that he tarries not an hour.'

XXXVII

The tear was in Queen Mary's eye, 840
 As forth she held her hand.
 'Then is the time of parting nigh!
 For, Bothwell, my command
 Is that you go and save a life
 That else were lost in useless strife.
 Farewell! We shall not meet again;
 But I have passed such years of pain—
 So many partings have I known,
 That this poor heart has callous grown. 850
 Farewell! If any thing there be
 That moves you when you think on me,
 Believe that you are quite forgiven
 By one who bids you pray to Heaven!
 No soul alive so innocent
 But needs must beg at Mercy's door—
 Farewell!' She passed from out the tent.
 O God—I never saw her more!

XXXVIII

Was it a dream? or did I hear
 A yell of scorn assail my ear,
 As frantic from the host I rode? 860
 The very charger I bestrode
 Rebelled in wrath against the rein,
 And strove to bear me back again!
 Lost, lost! I cared not where I went—
 Lost, lost! And none were there,
 Save those who sought in banishment
 A refuge from despair.
 How fared the rest? I do not know,
 For I was maddened with my woe.
 But I remember when we sailed 870
 From out that dreary Forth,
 And in the dull of morning hailed
 The headlands of the North:
 The hills of Caithness wrapped in rain,
 The reach of Stroma's isle,
 The Pentland, where the furious main
 Roars white for many a mile—

Until we steered by Shapinsay.
 And moored our bark in Kirkwall bay.
 Yet not in Orkney would they brook
 The presence of their banished Duke.
 The castle gates were shut and barred,
 Up rose in arms the burgher guard;
 No refuge there we found.
 But that I durst not tarry long,
 I would have ta'en that castle strong.
 And razed it to the ground!
 North, ever north! We sailed by night,
 And yet the sky was red with light,
 And purple rolled the deep.
 When morning came, we saw the tide
 Break thundering on the rugged side
 Of Sumburgh's awful steep;
 And, weary of the wave, at last
 In Bressay Sound our anchor cast.

850

850

XXXIX

O faithless were the waves and wind!
 Still the avenger sped behind.
 No rock so rude, no isle so lone.
 That I might claim it as my own.
 A price was set upon my head.
 Hunted from place to place I fled;
 Till chased across the open seas,
 I met the surly Dane.
 These were his gifts and welcome—these!
 A dungeon and a chain!

900

XL

Descend, black night! Blot out thy stars;
 Nor let them through those prison bars
 Behold me writhing here!
 For there's a hand upon my heart
 That makes my being thrill and start;
 A voice is in mine ear.
 I hear its whisper, sad and low,
 As if a spirit wailed in woe—
 'Bothwell! thine end is near.'
 O then, in mercy, keep away.
 Ye spectral forms, nor cast dismay
 Upon me in my dying hour!
 Why should it please you that I cower.
 Like a lashed hound, beneath your stare,
 And shriek, a madman in despair?
 Give me one night, 'tis all I crave,
 To pass in darkness to the grave,
 Nor more this agony renew—

910

920

What's here?—No phantom of the tomb!
Death has not cast his livid hue
On that pale cheek, nor stamped his gloom
Upon the forehead, fair and high,
Of Scotland's Queenly Majesty!
Mary, is't thou? and com'st thou here,
Alive, to chide me for my wrong?
O, for the love of God, forbear!
Haunt me not now! I've suffered long,
And bitter has my anguish been!
What brings thee hither, woeful Queen?
Ah, what is that? a scaffold dressed—
The axe, the headsman, and the priest—
O God! it surely cannot be!—
Come, Death; and I will welcome thee!

MAGUS MUIR

[Blackwood's Magazine, November 1847]

THE subject of the following ballad is the atrocious and dastardly assassination of James Sharp, Archbishop of St. Andrews and Primate of Scotland.

More than one attempt was made upon the life of that eminent prelate. On the 11th of July, 1668, a shot was fired into his carriage in the High Street of Edinburgh, by one James Mitchell, a fanatical field preacher, and an associate of the infamous Major Weir. The primate escaped unharmed, but his colleague Honyman, Bishop of Orkney, received a severe wound, from the effects of which he died in the following year. The assassin Mitchell fled to Holland, but subsequently returned, and was arrested in the midst of his preparations for another diabolical attempt. This man, who afterwards suffered for his crimes, and who in consequence has obtained a place in the book of 'Covenanting Martyrology', described his motive 'as an impulse of the Holy Spirit, and justified it from Phinehas killing Cosbi and Zimri, and from that law in Deuteronomy commanding to kill false prophets'! This is no matter of surprise, when it is recollected that the 'principles of assassination', as Mr. C. K. Sharpe observes, were 'strongly recommended in *Naphthali*, *Jus Populi Vindicatum*, and afterwards in the *Hind let Loose*, which books were in almost as much esteem with the Presbyterians as their Bibles.' Sir George Mackenzie states: 'These irreligious and heterodox books, called *Naphthali* and *Jus Populi*, had made the killing of all dissenters from Presbytery seem not only lawful, but a duty among many of that profession: and in a postscript to *Jus Populi*, it was told that the sending of the Archbishop of St. Andrews' head to the king would be the best present that could be made to Jesus Christ.'¹

These principles, at first received with doubt, were afterwards carried out to the utmost extent by the more violent of the insurgent party. Murder and assault, frequently perpetrated upon unoffending and defenceless persons, became so common, that the ordinary course of the law was suspended, and its execution devolved upon the military. Scotland was indeed in a complete state of terrorism. Gangs of armed fanatics, who had openly renounced their allegiance, perambulated the country, committing every sort of atrocity,

¹ Lawson's *History of the Episcopal Church of Scotland*.

and directing their attacks promiscuously against the clerical incumbents and the civil magistracy.

But the crowning act of guilt was the murder of the unfortunate Archbishop. On the 3rd of May, 1679, a party of the Five non-conformists were prowling near the village of Ceres, on the outlook, it is said, for Carmichael the Sheriff-substitute of the county, against whom they had sworn vengeance if he should ever fall into their hands. This party consisted of twelve persons, at the head of whom were John Balfour of Kinloch, better known by his *soubriquet* of Burley, and his brother-in-law, David Hackstoun of Rathillet. Balfour, whose moral character had never stood high, though his religious fanaticism was undoubted, had been at one time chamberlain to the Archbishop, and had failed to account for a considerable portion of the rents, which it was his official duty to levy. Hackstoun, whose earlier life had been in little accordance with the ostensible tenets of his party, was also in debt to the Archbishop, and had been arrested by the new chamberlain. 'These two persons', says Mr. Lawson, 'had most substantial reasons for their rancour and hatred towards the Archbishop, apart from their religious animosities.'

It does not seem to be clearly ascertained, whether Carmichael was the real object of their search, or whether their design from the first had been directed against the person of the Primate. It would appear, however, from the depositions taken shortly after the murder, that the deed had been long premeditated, and that three days previously some of the assassins had met at a house in Ceres and concerted their plans. The incumbent of Ceres, the Rev. Alexander Leslie, was also to have been made a victim if found in company with the Prelate.

Fortunately for himself, Carmichael eluded their search, but towards evening the carriage of the Archbishop was seen approaching the waste ground near St. Andrews, which is still known by the name of Magus Muir. A hurried council was then held. Hackstoun, probably from some remnant of compunction, declined to take the lead; but Balfour, whose bloodthirsty disposition was noted even in those unhappy times, assumed the command, and called upon the others to follow him. The consummation of the tragedy can best be told in the words of the historian already quoted.

'When the Primate's servants saw their master followed by a band of men on horseback, they drove rapidly, but they were overtaken on the muir about three miles west of St. Andrews; the murderers having previously satisfied themselves, by asking a female domestic of the neighbouring farmer, who refused to inform them himself, that it was really the Archbishop's coach.

‘Russell first came up, and recognized the Primate sitting with his daughter. The Archbishop looked out of the coach, and Russell cast his cloak from him, exclaiming,—“Judas, be taken!” The Primate ordered the postilion to drive, at which Russell fired at the man, and called to his associates to join him. With the exception of Hackstoun, they threw off their cloaks, and continued firing at the coach for nearly half a mile. A domestic of the Archbishop presented a carbine, but was seized by the neck, and it was pulled out of his hands. One of the assassins outran the coach, and struck one of the horses on the head with a sword. The postilion was ordered to stop, and for refusing he was cut on the face and ankle. They soon rendered it impossible to proceed further with the coach. Disregarding the screams, entreaties, and tears of his daughter, a pistol was discharged at the Primate beneath his left arm, and the young lady was seen removing the smoking combustibles from her father’s black gown. Another shot was fired, and James Russell seized a sword from one of his associates, dismounted, and at the coach-door called to the Archbishop, whom he designated *Judas*, to come forth.’ Sir William Sharp’s account of what now occurred, which would be doubtless related to him by his sister, is as follows:—‘They fired several shots at the coach, and commanded my dearest father to come out, which he said he would. When he had come out, not being yet wounded, he said,—“Gentlemen, I beg my life!” “No—bloody villain, betrayer of the cause of Christ—no mercy!” Then said he,—“I ask none for myself, but have mercy on my poor child!” and, holding up his hand to one of them to get his, that he would spare his child, he cut him on the wrist. Then falling down upon his knees, and holding up his hands, he prayed that God would forgive them; and begging mercy for his sins from his Saviour, they murdered him by sixteen great wounds in his back, head, and one above his left eye, three in his left hand when he was holding it up, with a shot above his left breast, which was found to be powder. After this damnable deed they took the papers out of his pocket, robbed my sister and their servants of all their papers, gold, and money, and one of these hellish rascals cut my sister on the thumb, when she had him by the bridle begging her father’s life.’

So died with the calmness and intrepidity of a martyr this reverend and learned prelate, maligned indeed by the fanatics of his own and succeeding ages, but revered and beloved by those who best knew his innate worth, unostentatious charity, and pure piety of soul. In the words of a worthy Presbyterian divine of last century,—‘His inveterate enemies are agreed in ascribing to him the high praise of a beneficent and humane disposition. He bestowed a considerable part of his income in ministering to pressing

indigence, and relieving the wants of private distress. In the exercise of his charity he had no contracted views. The widows and orphans of the Presbyterian brethren richly shared his bounty without knowing whence it came. He died with the intrepidity of a hero, and the piety of a Christian, praying for the assassins with his latest breath.'

MAGUS MUIR

GENTLY ye fall, ye summer showers,

On blade, and leaf, and tree :
Ye bring a blessing to the earth,
But nane—O nane, to me !

Ye cannot wash this red right hand
Free from its deadly stain,
Ye cannot cool the burning ban
That lies within my brain.

O be ye still, ye blithesome birds,
Within the woodland spray, 10
And keep your songs within your hearts
Until another day :

And cease to fill the blooming brae
With warblings light and clear,
For there's a sweeter song than yours
That I maun never hear.

It was upon the Magus Muir
Within the lanesome glen,
That in the gloaming hour I met
Wi' Burley and his men. 20

Our hearts were hard as was the steel
We bore within the hand ;
But harder was the heart of him
That led that bluidy band.

Dark lay the clouds upon the west
Like mountains huge and still :
And fast the summer lightning leaped
Behind the distant hill.

It shone on grim Rathillet's brow
With pale and ghastly glare : 30
I caught the glimpse of his cold gray eye—
There was MURDER glittering there !

Away, away ! o'er bent and hill,
Through moss and muir we sped :
Around us roared the midnight storm,
Behind us lay the dead.

We spoke no word, we made no sign
But blindly rade we on,
For an angry voice was in our ears
That bade us to begone. 40
We were brothers all baptised in blood,
Yet sought to be alone!

Away, away! with headlong speed
We rade through wind and rain,
And never more upon the earth
Did we all meet again.

There's some have died upon the field,
And some upon the tree,
And some are bent and broken men
Within a far countrie. 50
But the heaviest curse hath lighted down
On him that tempted me!

O hame, hame, hame!—that holy place—
There is nae hame for me!
There's not a child that sees my face
But runs to its mither's knee.

There's not a man of woman born
That dares to call me kin—
O grave! wert thou but deep enough
To hide me and my sin! 60

I wander east, I wander west,
I neither can stop nor stay,
But I dread the night when all men rest
Far more than the glint of day.

O weary night, wi' all its stars
Sae clear, and pure, and hie!
Like the eyes of angels up in heaven
That will not weep for me!

O weary night, when the silence lies
Around me, broad and deep, 70
And dreams of earth, and dreams of heaven,
That vex me in my sleep.

For aye I see the murdered man,
As on the muir he lay,
With his pale white face, and reverend head,
And his locks sae thin and gray;
And my hand grows red with the holy blude
I shed that bitter day!

O were I but a water drop
To melt into the sea— 80
But never water yet came down
Could wash that blude from me!

And O! to dream of that dear heaven
That I had hoped to win—
And the heavy gates o' the burning gowd
That will not let me in!

I hear the psalm that's sung in heaven,
When the morning breaks sae fair,
And my soul is sick wi' the melodie
Of the angels quiring there.

90

I feel the breath of God's ain flowers
From out that happy land,
But the fairest flower o' Paradise
Would wither in my hand.

And aye before me gapes a pit
Far deeper than the sea,
And waefu' sounds rise up below,
And deid men call on me.

O that I never had been born,
And ne'er the light had seen!
Dear God—to look on yonder gates
And this dark gulf between!

100

O that a wee wee bird wad come
Though 'twere but ance a-year!
And bring but sae much mool and earth
As its sma' feet could bear,

And drap it in the ugsome hole
That lies 'twixt heaven and me,
I yet might hope, ere the warld were dune,
My soul might saved be!

110

LATIMER AND RIDLEY

BURNED AT THE STAKE IN OXFORD, A.D. 1555.

[*Blackwood's Magazine*, February 1851]

[THE fires of Smithfield and the massacre of Bartholomew are truly events of little consequence in history, if they fail to convince us of the aggressive and unscrupulous policy of the Roman Catholic Church. The claim of the Pope, which never has undergone or can undergo any modification whatever, is nothing less than one of universal supremacy. That claim is asserted now as broadly and boldly as it was three hundred years ago; when, at the accession of Mary, Cardinal Pole was sent over as legate to England, for the reduction of that realm to the obedience of the See of Rome, and for the extirpation of heresy.

It matters not what may have been the private character of the Cardinal. He has been represented as a man of mild nature, humane disposition, and averse to the infamous cruelties which were then perpetrated, the odium of which has been commonly thrown upon Bishops Gardiner and Bonner. This much at least is plain, that, whatever may have been his opinion as to the methods which were employed for the suppression of Protestantism, he did not deem it expedient to exercise his great power in mitigating the fury or tempering the cruelty of the persecution. He was a passive witness of the enormities, and allowed the mandates of the Church to supersede the dictates of humanity and the merciful teaching of the Saviour.

The records of the reign of Mary ought, especially at the present time, to be studied by those who, in their zeal for toleration, forget that they have to contend with the most bitter and uncompromising enemies. Not only the sufferings and fortitude of the martyrs, (among whom were numbered five bishops, and twenty-one clergymen of the Reformed faith of England,) but the charges on which they were condemned, and the noble testimony which they bore, will be found detailed in John Foxe's *Acts and Monuments*. Next to that of Archbishop Cranmer, the names of Latimer and Ridley can never be forgotten in this land, so long as the voice of Protestantism is heard against Papal superstition and supremacy. Political and ecclesiastical dominion are things inseparable from each other in the eye of Rome; and wherever she has succeeded in planting her foot, she has attempted to enforce spiritual submission, and to extinguish liberty of conscience, by the power of the secular arm. The following extract, from the work already referred to, narrates the close of the terrible tragedy which consigned two English prelates to the flames at Oxford:—

‘Then they brought a faggot, kindled with fire, and laid the same down at Dr. Ridley’s feet. To whom master Latimer spake in this manner: “Be of good comfort, master Ridley, and play the man. We shall this day light such a candle, by God’s grace, in England, as I trust shall never be put out.”

‘And so the fire being given unto them, when Dr. Ridley saw the fire flaming up towards him, he cried with a wonderful loud voice, “In manus tuas, Domine, commendo spiritum meum: Domine, recipe spiritum meum.” And after, repeated this latter part often in English, “Lord, Lord, receive my spirit”; master Latimer crying as vehemently on the other side, “O Father of heaven, receive my soul!” who received the flame as it were embracing of it. After that he had stroked his face with his hands, and as it were bathed them a little in the fire, he soon died (as it appeareth) with very little pain or none. And thus much concerning the end of this old and blessed servant of God, master Latimer, for whose laborious

travails, fruitful life, and constant death, the whole realm hath cause to give great thanks to Almighty God.

But master Ridley, by reason of the evil making of the fire unto him, because the wooden faggots were laid about the gorse, and over-high built, the fire burned first beneath, being kept down by the wood; which when he felt, he desired them for Christ's sake to let the fire come unto him. Which when his brother-in-law heard, but not well understood, intending to rid him out of his pain (for the which cause he gave attendance,) as one in such sorrow not well advised what he did, heaped faggots upon him, so that he clean covered him, which made the fire more vehement beneath, that it burned clean all his nether parts, before it once touched the upper; and that made him leap up and down under the faggots, and often desire them to let the fire come unto him, saying, "I cannot burn." Which indeed appeared well; for, after his legs were consumed by reason of his struggling through the pain (whereof he had no release, but only his contentation in God,) he showed that side toward us clean, shirt and all untouched with flame. Yet in all this torment he forgot not to call unto God still, having in his mouth, "Lord, have mercy upon me!" intermingling his cry, "Let the fire come unto me: I cannot burn." In which pangs he laboured till one of the standers-by with his bill pulled off the faggots above, and where he saw the fire flame up, he wrested himself unto that side. And when the flame touched the gunpowder, he was seen to stir no more, but burned on the other side, falling down at master Latimer's feet; which, some said, happened by reason that the chain loosed; others said, that he fell over the chain by reason of the poise of his body, and the weakness of the nether limbs.

'Some said, that before he was like to fall from the stake, he desired them to hold him to it with their bills. However it was, surely it moved hundreds to tears, in beholding the horrible sight; for I think there was none that had not clean exiled all humanity and mercy, which would not have lamented to behold the fury of the fire so to rage upon their bodies.']

LATIMER AND RIDLEY

I

'Tis good to sing of champions old
 The honour and renown;
 To tell how truth and loyalty
 Have saved an earthly crown.
 But shame to us, if on the day
 When higher themes are given—
 When man's device and man's decree
 Usurp the word of Heaven—
 We dare forget the nobler names
 Of those who vanquished death,
 To keep unstained, from sire to son,
 Our freedom and our faith!

II

We bend the knee and bow the head
Upon the Christmas morn,
In token that, for sinful men,
The Saviour, Christ, was born.
Nor less, unto the faithful heart,
That time must hallowed be,
On which our Lord and Master died
In anguish on the tree;
And Easter brings its holy hymn,
Its triumph o'er the grave,
When He, the dead, arose in might,
Omnipotent to save.

20

III

We worship as our fathers did,
In this our English home,
Not asking grace from mortal man
Nor craving leave from Rome.
Once more the warning note is heard,
The hour of strife is near—
What seeks he, with his mitred pomp,
That rank Italian, here?
What sought they in the former days,
When last that mission came?
The will, the craft, the creed of Rome
Remain for aye the same!

30

IV

Woe, woe to those who dared to dream
That England might be free;
That Papal power and Papal rule
Were banished o'er the sea;
That he who sate in Peter's chair,
Had lost the will to harm,
Was powerless as a withered crone
Who works by spell and charm!
Woe, woe to those who dared deny
The Roman Pontiff's sway!
His red right arm is bared in wrath,
To smite, and burn, and slay!

40

V

Light up, light up the ready fires!
Sound trumpet, fife, and drum;
Give welcome meet to him who brings
The sovereign hests of Rome.
No humble barefoot messenger—
No sandalled monk is he;
A stately priest—a Cardinal—
Proclaims the Pope's decree.

50

And see! upon her royal knees
The Queen of England falls.
In homage to a mightier Prince,
Within her fathers' halls!

60

VI

'Tis done. Fair England! bow thy head,
And mourn thy grievous sin!
What though the Universal Church
Will gladly let thee in?
The stain is still upon thy brow,
The guilt is on thy hand;
For thou hast dared to worship God,
Against the Pope's command.
And thou hast scoffed at saint and shrine,
Denied the Queen of Heaven,
And opened up with impious hands
The Holy Book unshriven.

70

VII

For this, and for thy stubborn will
In daring to be free,
A fearful penance must be done
Ere guilt shall pass from thee.
The prophets of the new-born faith,
The leaders of the blind—
Arise, and take them in the midst—
Leave not a man behind!
In London's streets and Oxford's courts
A solemn fast proclaim,
And let the sins of England's Church
Be purged away by flame!

80

VIII

In order long, the monkish throng
Wind through the Oxford street,
With up-drawn cowls, and folded hands,
And slow and noiseless feet.
Before their train the Crucifix
Is borne in state on high,
And banners with the Agnus wave,
And crosiers glitter by:
With spangled image, star-becrowned,
And gilded pyx they come,
To lay once more on English necks
The hateful yoke of Rome.

90

IX

The mail-clad vassals of the Church
With men-at-arms are there,
And England's banner overhead
Floats proudly in the air.

100

And England's bishops walk beneath—
 Ah me! that sight of woe!
 An old, old man, with tottering limbs
 And hair as white as snow.
 Another, yet in manhood's prime.
 The blameless and the brave—
 And must they pass, O cruel Rome,
 To yonder hideous grave?

X

'Ay—for the Church reclaims her own;
 To her all power is given—
 The faggot and the sword on earth—
 The keys of hell and heaven.
 To sweep the heretics away,
 'Tis thus the Church commands—
 What means that wailing in the crowd?
 Why wring they so their hands?
 Why do the idle women shriek—
 The men, why frown they so?
 Lift up the Host, and let them kneel,
 As onwards still we go.'

XI

The Host was raised—they knelt not yet—
 Nor English knee was bowed,
 Till Latimer and Ridley came,
 Each in his penance-shroud.
 Then bent the throng on either side,
 Then knelt both sire and dame,
 And thousand voices, choked with sobs,
 Invoked the martyr's name.
 No chaunted hymn could drown the cry,
 No tramp, nor clash of steel—
 O England! in that piteous hour,
 Was this thy sole appeal?

XII

What more? That cry arose on high;
 'Twas heard, where all is calm,
 By Him who, for the martyr's pang,
 Vouchsafes the martyr's palm:
 By Him who needs no human arm
 To work his righteous will:—
 'The Lord is in his holy place,
 Let all the earth be still.'
 They said it—they who gave the doom,
 In that most awful name—
 And if they spoke in blasphemy,
 So shall they die in shame!

XIII

To death—to death! The stake is near.
 The faggots piled around;
 The men-at-arms have made their ring,
 The spearmen take their ground;
 The torches, reeking in the sun,
 Send up their heavy fume;
 And by the pile the torturer
 Is waiting for the doom.
 With earnest eye and steadfast step,
 Approach the martyr twain—
 ‘Our cross!’ they said—they kissed the stake,
 And bowed them to the chain.

150

XIV

Short be the pang!—Not yet, not yet!
 The Tempter lingers near—
 Rome parts not with her victims so;
 A Priest is at their ear.
 ‘Life—life, and pardon! say the word,
 Why still so stubborn be?
 Do homage to our Lord the Pope—
 One word, and you are free!
 O brothers! yield ye even now—
 Speak but a single name—
 Salvation lies not but with Rome;
 Why die in raging flame?’

160

XV

Then out spoke aged Latimer:—
 ‘I tarry by the stake,
 Not trusting to my own weak heart,
 But for the Saviour’s sake.
 Why speak of life or death to me,
 Whose days are but a span?
 Our crown is yonder—Ridley—see!
 Be strong, and play the man.
 God helping, such a torch this day
 We’ll light on English land.
 That Rome and all her Cardinals
 Shall never quench the brand!’

170

180

XVI

They died. O ask not how they died!
 May never witness tell,
 That once again on English ground
 Was wrought that deed of hell!
 The Consul, mad for Christian blood,
 Even in his deadliest rage,
 Was human when he opened up
 The famished lion’s cage—

More human far than they of Rome.
 Who claimed the Christian name.
 When those, the ministers of Christ,
 Were writhing in the flame!

150

XVII

Harlot of Rome! and dost thou come
 With bland demeanour now?
 The bridal-smile upon thy lips,
 The flush upon thy brow—
 The cup of sorcery in thy hand,
 Still in the same array.
 As when our fathers in their wrath
 Dashed it and thee away?
 No! by the ashes of the saints,
 Who died beneath thy hand,
 Thou shalt not dare to claim as thine
 One foot of English land!

200

XVIII

The echo of thy tread shall make
 The light still higher burn—
 A blaze shall rise from Cranmer's grave
 And martyred Ridley's urn!
 A blaze which they who own thy power
 Shall stand aghast to see,
 A blaze that in your infamy
 Shall show both them and thee!
 Yes! send thy Cardinals again—
 Once more array thy powers—
 Their watchword is, The Pope of Rome—
 The Word of God, be ours!

210

THE CRUSADERS' MARCH

WRITTEN FOR MUSIC.

[*Blackwood's Magazine*, September 1852]

I

RAISE ye up the song of Zion;
 Raise it up 'mong Judah's hills.
 Who will dare to meet the Lion
 By the fountains of the rills?
 Strong, strong—raise the song!
 Raise it the hills among,
 Raise it till the Moslem hear—
 Sound, sound, trump and drum!
 Let them know we come—
 Cross and banner, sword and spear!

10

II

Base it were for us to linger
By the dull and weary wave,
While the Unbeliever's finger
Points with scorn the Holy Grave.
Ride, ride!—to-morrow's tide
Sees us the spot beside
Watered by our Lady's tear.
Sound, sound, trump and drum!
Let them know we come—
Cross and banner, sword and spear!

20

III

Saintly forms above are bending,
Martyrs' hands are beckoning on;
They, the brave, who died contending
For the faith that Christians own!
Speed, speed!—pilgrim's weed
Shows not like steel at need.
Men in mail, not monks, are here!
Sound, sound, trump and drum!
Let them know we come—
Cross and banner, sword and spear!

30

IV

Lo! the evening shadows gather;
See, the night is settling down.
Shield us, O Almighty Father!—
Shield our army, and thine own!
Halt, halt! beneath the palm
Raise ye the evening psalm,
Raise it up both loud and clear.
Sound, sound, trump and drum!
Let them know we come—
Cross and banner, sword and spear!

40

V

Bright the stars above are burning,
As they may have burned of yore,
When the shepherds, home returning,
Told the words that angels bore.
Pray, pray! for the day
Calls us again away.
Once more let the foemen hear.
Sound, sound, trump and drum!
Let them know we come—
Cross and banner, sword and spear!

50

FROM THE 'BON GAULTIER
BALLADS'

1845-1857

Aytoun's independent contributions to the Bon Gaultier Ballads as determined by Sir Theodore Martin in his latest edition are included here by kind permission of Messrs. W. Blackwood & Sons, the owners of the copyright. Some of the other poems were the joint work of Aytoun and Martin, but they are not here given. The text is that of the fifth edition, 1857 (three later editions published in Aytoun's life-time are reprints of the fifth edition), and variant readings of earlier editions are given in the footnotes. The magazine appearance of each poem is noted under its title, and the dates in the footnotes anterior to 1845 are those of these magazine appearances.

EDITIONS OF THE 'BON GAULTIER BALLADS'
DURING AYTOUN'S LIFETIME.

Edition	1	1845	16mo	39 Ballads.
„	2	1849	sm. 4to	51 Ballads. This has not been seen by the present editor.
„	3	[1849]	„	53 Ballads. This is indicated by 1849 ² in our footnotes.
„	4	[1855]	„	54 Ballads.
„	5	1857	„	54 Ballads.
„	6	1859	„	54 Ballads.
„	7	1861	„	54 Ballads. These are all reprints
„	8	1864	„	54 Ballads.) of the Fifth Edition.

THE BROKEN PITCHER

[*Tait's Edinburgh Magazine*, December 1841, as 'From the Spanish.
by J. G. Scalphart, Esq.' in 'Review of Unpublished
Annuals']

It was a Moorish maiden was sitting by a well,
And what the maiden thought of, I cannot, cannot tell.
When by there rode a valiant knight from the town
of Oviedo

Alphonzo Guzman was he hight, the Count of Toledo.

'Oh, maiden, Moorish maiden! why sitt'st thou by the
spring?

Say, dost thou seek a lover, or any other thing?

Why dost thou look upon me, with eyes so dark and
wide,

And wherefore doth the pitcher lie broken by thy
side?'

'I do not seek a lover, thou Christian knight so gay.
Because an article like that hath never come my
way;

And why I gaze upon you, I cannot, cannot tell.

Except that in your iron hose you look uncommon
swell.

'My pitcher it is broken, and this the reason is,—
A shepherd came behind me, and tried to snatch
a kiss;

I would not stand his nonsense, so ne'er a word I spoke.
But scored him on the costard, and so the jug was broke.

'My uncle, the Alcayde, he waits for me at home.

And will not take his tumbler until Zorayda come:

I cannot bring him water—the pitcher is in pieces—
And so I'm sure to catch it, 'cos he wallops all his
nieces.'

'Oh maiden, Moorish maiden! wilt thou be ruled by
me?

Then wipe thine eyes and rosy lips, and give me
kisses three;

And I'll give thee my helmet, thou kind and courteous
lady,

To carry home the water to thy uncle, the Alcayde.'

4 Toledo] Desperado 1841, 1845, 1849² 7 dost thou look]
gaze] thou in all earlier versions dark] large in all earlier
versions

He lighted down from off his steed—he tied him to
 a tree—
 He bent him to the maiden, and he took his kisses
 three;
 'To wrong thee, sweet Zorayda, I swear would be
 a sin!
 And he knelt him at the fountain, and he dipped his
 helmet in.
 Up rose the Moorish maiden—behind the knight she
 steals,
 And caught Alphonzo Guzman in a twinkling by the
 heels:
 She tipped him in, and held him down beneath the³⁰
 bubbling water,—
 'Now, take thou that for venturing to kiss Al
 Hamet's daughter!'
 A Christian maid is weeping in the town of Oviedo;
 She waits the coming of her love, the Count of Tolo-
 ledo.
 I pray you all in charity, that you will never tell,
 How he met the Moorish maiden beside the lonely
 well.

THE FIGHT WITH THE SNAPPING TURTLE;

OR, THE AMERICAN ST. GEORGE.

[*Tait's Edinburgh Magazine*, from 'Bon Gaultier and his
 friends', June 1844]

FYTTE FIRST

HAVE you heard of Philip Slingsby,
 Slingsby of the manly chest;
 How he slew the Snapping Turtle
 In the regions of the West?

Every day the huge Cawana
 Lifted up its monstrous jaws;
 And it swallowed Langton Bennett,
 And digested Rufus Dawes.

Riled, I ween, was Philip Slingsby,
 Their untimely deaths to hear;
 For one author owed him money,
 And the other loved him dear.

10

26 bent] bowed in all earlier versions and he took] and
 took 1841, 1845, 1849² 28 And he] He 1841, 1845, 1849²
 and he dipped] and dipped 1841, 1845 30 in a twinkling]
 up tightly 1841, 1845, 1849² 34 Tololedo] Desparedo 1841
 1845, 1849²

'Listen now, sagacious Tyler,
Whom the loafers all obey;
What reward will Congress give me,
If I take this pest away?
Then sagacious Tyler answered,
'You're the ring-tailed squealer! Less
Than a hundred heavy dollars
Won't be offered you, I guess!

22

'And a lot of wooden nutmegs
In the bargain, too, we'll throw—
Only you just fix the critter.
Won't you liquor ere you go?'

Straightway leaped the valiant Slingsby
Into armour of Seville,
With a strong Arkansas toothpick
Screwed in every joint of steel.

'Come thou with me, Cullen Bryant,
Come with me, as squire, I pray;
Be the Homer of the battle
Which I go to wage to-day.'

30

So they went along careering
With a loud and martial tramp,
Till they neared the Snapping Turtle
In the dreary Swindle Swamp.

But when Slingsby saw the water,
Somewhat pale, 'I ween, was he.
'If I come not back, dear Bryant,
Tell the tale to Melanie!

40

'Tell her that I died devoted,
Victim to a noble task!
Hain't you got a drop of brandy
In the bottom of your flask?'

As he spoke, an alligator,
Swam across the sullen creek;
And the two Columbians started,
When they heard the monster shriek;

For a snout of huge dimensions
Rose above the waters high,
And took down the alligator,
As a trout takes down a fly.

50

'Tarnal death! the Snapping Turtle!'—
Thus the squire in terror cried;
But the noble Slingsby straightway
Drew the toothpick from his side.

'Fare thee well!' he cried, and dashing
Through the waters, strongly swam :
Meanwhile, Cullen Bryant, watching,
Breathed a prayer and sucked a dram.

60

Sudden from the slimy bottom
Was the snout again upreared,
With a snap as loud as thunder,—
And the Slingsby disappeared.

Like a mighty steam-ship foundering,
Down the monstrous vision sank ;
And the ripple, slowly rolling,
Plashed and played upon the bank.

Still and stiller grew the water,
Hushed the canes within the brake ;
There was but a kind of coughing
At the bottom of the lake.

70

Bryant wept as loud and deeply
As a father for a son—
'He's a finished 'coon, is Slingsby,
And the brandy's nearly done!'

FYTTE SECOND

In a trance of sickening anguish,
Cold and stiff, and sore and damp,
For two days did Bryant linger
By the dreary Swindle Swamp ;

80

Always peering at the water,
Always waiting for the hour.
When those monstrous jaws should open
As he saw them ope before.

Still in vain ;—the alligators
Scrambled through the marshy brake,
And the vampire leeches gaily
Sucked the garfish in the lake.

But the Snapping Turtle never
Rose for food or rose for rest,
Since he lodged the steel deposit
In the bottom of his chest.

90

Only always from the bottom
Sounds of frequent coughing rolled,
Just as if the huge Cawana
Had a most confounded cold.

57 dashing] flashing 1844 74 a son] his son 1844
94 Sounds of frequent] Violent sounds of 1844, 1845, 1849²

On the bank lay Cullen Bryant,
As the second moon arose,
Gouging on the sloping greensward
Some imaginary foes.

100

When the swamp began to tremble,
And the canes to rustle fast,
As though some stupendous body
Through their roots were crushing past.

And the waters boiled and bubbled.
And, in groups of twos and threes,
Several alligators bounded,
Smart as squirrels, up the trees.

Then a hideous head was lifted,
With such huge distended jaws,
That they might have held Goliath
Quite as well as Rufus Dawes.

110

Paws of elephantine thickness
Dragged its body from the bay,
And it glared at Cullen Bryant
In a most unpleasant way.

Then it writhed as if in torture,
And it staggered to and fro;
And its very shell was shaken
In the anguish of its throes:

120

And its cough grew loud and louder,
And its sob more husky thick!
For, indeed, it was apparent
That the beast was very sick.

Till, at last, a spasmy vomit
Shook its carcass through and through,
And as if from out a cannon,
All in armour Slingsby flew.

Bent and bloody was the bowie
Which he held within his grasp;
And he seemed so much exhausted
That he scarce had strength to gasp—

130

'Gouge him, Bryant! darn ye, gouge him!
Gouge him while he's on the shore!'
Bryant's thumbs were straightway buried
Where no thumbs had pierced before.

108 though] if 1844, 1845, 1849² 104 were 1844, 1855,
1857] was 1845, 1849² 105 waters] water 1844, 1845, 1849²
113 elephantine] adamantite 1844 125 spasmy] violent
1844, 1845, 1849² 135 Bryant's] and his in all earlier versions

Right from out their bony sockets
 Did he scoop the monstrous balls;
 And, with one convulsive shudder,
 Dead the Snapping Turtle falls!

140

‘Post the tin, sagacious Tyler!’
 But the old experienced file,
 Leering first at Clay and Webster,
 Answered, with a quiet smile—

‘Since you dragged the ‘tarnal crittur
 From the bottom of the ponds,
 Here’s the hundred dollars due you,
All in Pennsylvanian Bonds!’

THE LAY OF MR. COLT

[*Fraser's Magazine*, August 1843. From ‘A Night at Seleg Longfellow’s’.]

[THE story of Mr. Colt, of which our Lay contains merely the sequel, is this: A New York printer, of the name of Adams, had the effrontery to call upon him one day for payment of an account, which the independent Colt settled by cutting his creditor’s head to fragments with an axe. He then packed his body in a box, sprinkling it with salt, and despatched it to a packet bound for New Orleans. Suspicions having been excited, he was seized, and tried before Judge Kent. The trial is, perhaps, the most disgraceful upon the records of any country. The ruffian’s mistress was produced in court, and examined, in disgusting detail, as to her connection with Colt, and his movements during the days and nights succeeding the murder. The head of the murdered man was bandied to and fro in the court, handed up to the jury, and commented on by witnesses and counsel; and to crown the horrors of the whole proceeding, the wretch’s own counsel, a Mr. Emmet, commencing the defence with a cool admission that his client took the life of Adams, and following it up by a detail of the whole circumstances of this most brutal murder in the first person, as though he himself had been the murderer, ended by telling the jury, that his client was ‘*entitled to the sympathy of a jury of his country*’, as ‘*a young man just entering into life, whose prospects, probably, have been permanently blasted.*’ Colt was found guilty; but a variety of exceptions were taken to the charge by the judge, and after a long series of

appeals, which *occupied more than a year from the date of the conviction*, the sentence of death was ratified by Governor Seward. The rest of Colt's story is told in our ballad.¹⁷

STREAK THE FIRST

.

AND now the sacred rite was done, and the marriage-knot was tied,
And Colt withdrew his blushing wife a little way
aside;
'Let's go', he said, 'into my cell, let's go alone, my dear;
I fain would shelter that sweet face from the sheriff's
odious leer.
The gaoler and the hangman, they are waiting both
for me,—
I cannot bear to see them wink so knowingly at thee!
Oh, how I loved thee, dearest! They say that I am
wild,
That a mother dares not trust me with the weasand
of her child;
They say my bowie-knife is keen to sliver into halves
The carcass of my enemy, as butchers slay their
calves.
They say that I am stern of mood, because, like salted¹⁰
beef,
I packed my quartered foeman up, and marked him
'prime tariff';
Because I thought to palm him on the simple-souled
John Bull,
And clear a small percentage on the sale at Liverpool;
It may be so, I do not know—these things, perhaps,
may be;
But surely I have always been a gentleman to thee!
Then come, my love, into my cell, short bridal space
is ours,—
Nay, sheriff, never look thy watch—I guess there's
good two hours.
We'll shut the prison doors and keep the gaping
world at bay,
For love is long as 'tarnity, though I must die to-
day!'²⁰

¹ This prose preface appeared first in 1845, altered from a footnote in 1848

18 palm him on the] palm him off on 1848, palm him on 1845

STREAK THE SECOND

The clock is ticking onward,
 It nears the hour of doom,
 And no one yet hath entered
 Into that ghastly room.
 The gaoler and the sheriff,
 They are walking to and fro:
 And the hangman sits upon the steps,
 And smokes his pipe below.
 In grisly expectation
 The prison all is bound, 30
 And, save expectation,
 You cannot hear a sound.
 The turnkey stands and ponders,—
 His hand upon the bolt,—
 'In twenty minutes more, I guess,
 'Twill all be up with Colt!
 But see, the door is opened!
 Forth comes the weeping bride;
 The courteous sheriff lifts his hat,
 And saunters to her side, 40
 'I beg your pardon, Mrs. C.,
 But is your husband ready?'
 'I guess you'd better ask himself,'
 Replied the woeful lady.

The clock is ticking onward,
 The minutes almost run,
 The hangman's pipe is nearly out,
 'Tis on the stroke of one.
 At every grated window
 Unshaven faces glare; 50
 There's Puke, the judge of Tennessee,
 And Lynch, of Delaware;
 And Batter, with the long black beard,
 Whom Hartford's maids know well;
 And Wilkinson, from Fish Kill Reach,
 The pride of New Rochelle;
 Elkanah Nutts, from Tarry Town,
 The gallant gouging boy;
 And coon-faced Bushwhack, from the hills 60
 That frown o'er modern Troy;
 Young Julep, whom our Willis loves,
 Because, 'tis said, that he
 One morning from a bookstall filched
 The tale of 'Melanie';

And Skunk, who fought his country's fight
 Beneath the stripes and stars,—
 All thronging at the windows stood,
 And gazed between the bars,
 The little boys that stood behind
 (Young thievish imps were they!)
 Displayed considerable *nous*
 On that eventful day;
 For bits of broken looking-glass
 They held aslant on high,
 And there a mirrored gallows-tree
 Met their delighted eye.¹

70

The clock is ticking onward;
 Hark! hark! it striketh one!
 Each felon draws a whistling breath,
 'Time's up with Colt; he's done!'

80

The sheriff looks his watch again,
 Then puts it in his fob,
 And turns him to the hangman,
 'Get ready for the job.'
 The gaoler knocketh loudly,
 The turnkey draws the bolt,
 And pleasantly the sheriff says,
 'We're waiting, Mister Colt!'

No answer! No! no answer!
 All's still as death within;
 The sheriff eyes the gaoler,
 The gaoler strokes his chin.
 'I shouldn't wonder, Nahum, if
 It were as you suppose.'
 The hangman looked unhappy, and
 The turnkey blew his nose.

90

They entered. On his pallet
 The noble convict lay.—
 The bridegroom on his marriage-bed,
 But not in trim array.
 His red right hand a razor held,
 Fresh sharpened from the hone,
 And his ivory neck was severed,
 And gashed into the bone.

100

And when the lamp is lighted
 In the long November days,
 And lads and lasses mingle
 At the shucking of the maize;

¹ A fact. [*Author's footnote*]
 108 At the] At 1843, 1845

When pies of smoking pumpkin
 Upon the table stand, 110
 And bowls of black molasses
 Go round from hand to hand;
 When slap-jacks, maple-sugared,
 Are hissing in the pan,
 And cider, with a dash of gin,
 Foams in the social can;
 When the goodman wets his whistle,
 And the goodwife scolds the child;
 And the girls exclaim convulsively,
 'Have done, or I'll be riled!' 120
 When the loafer sitting next them
 Attempts a sly caress,
 And whispers, 'Oh! you 'possum,
 You've fixed my heart, I guess!'
 With laughter and with weeping,
 Then shall they tell the tale,
 How Colt his foeman quartered,
 And died within the gaol.

THE LAY OF THE LEVITE

*[Tail's Edinburgh Magazine, April 1842. From 'The
 Poets of the Day. Reviewed by Bon Gaultier']*

THERE is a sound that's dear to me,
 It haunts me in my sleep;
 I wake, and, if I hear it not,
 I cannot choose but weep.
 Above the roaring of the wind,
 Above the river's flow,
 Methinks I hear the mystic cry
 Of 'Clo!—Old Clo!'

The exile's song, it thrills among
 The dwellings of the free. 10
 Its sound is strange to English ears,
 But 'tis not strange to me;
 For it hath shook the tented field
 In ages long ago,
 And hosts have quailed before the cry
 Of 'Clo!—Old Clo!'

Oh, lose it not! forsake it not!
 And let no time efface
 The memory of that solemn sound,
 The watchword of our race; 20

117 whistle] whittle 1843

Title The Lay of the Levite] 1843 adds By Abiram Lewti.

THE LAY OF THE LEVITE

253

For not by dark and eagle eye
The Hebrew shall you know.
So well as by the plaintive cry
Of 'Clo!—Old Clo!'

Even now, perchance, by Jordan's banks,
Or Sidon's sunny walls,
Where, dial-like, to portion time,
The palm-tree's shadow falls,
The pilgrims, wending on their way,
Will linger as they go,
And listen to the distant cry
Of 'Clo!—Old Clo!'

30

THE QUEEN IN FRANCE

AN ANCIENT SCOTTISH BALLAD.

[*Tait's Edinburgh Magazine*, November 1843. From 'Young
Scotland. By Bon Gaultier']

PART I

It fell upon the August month,
When landsmen bide at hame,
That our gude Queen went out to sail
Upon the saut-sea faem.
And she has ta'en the silk and gowd,
The like was never seen;
And she has ta'en the Prince Albert,
And the bauld Lord Aberdeen.
'Ye'se bide at hame, Lord Wellington:
Ye daurna gang wi' me:
For ye hae been ance in the land o' France,
And that's eneuch for ye.

10

'Ye'se bide at hame, Sir Robert Peel.
To gather the red and the white monie;
And see that my men dinna eat me up
At Windsor wi' their gluttonie.'
They hadna sailed a league, a league,—
A league, but barely twa,
When the lift grew dark, and the waves grew wan.
And the wind began to blaw.

20

'O weel weel may the waters rise,
In welcome o' their Queen;
What gars ye look sae white, Albert?
What makes your e'e sae green?'

'My heart is sick, my heid is sair :
 Gie me a glass o' the gude brandie :
 To set my foot on the braid green sward,
 I'd gie the half o' my yearly fee.

'It's sweet to hunt the sprightly hare
 On the bonny slopes o' Windsor lea,
 But O, it's ill to bear the thud
 And pitching o' the saut saut sea!' 30

And aye they sailed, and aye they sailed,
 Till England sank behind.
 And over to the coast of France
 They drave before the wind.

Then up and spak the King o' France,
 Was birling at the wine ;
 'O wha may be the gay ladye,
 That owns that ship sae fine?' 40

'And wha may be that bonny lad,
 That looks sae pale and wan ?
 I'll wad my lands o' Picardie,
 That he's nae Englishman.'

Then up and spak an auld French lord,
 Was sitting beneath his knee,
 'It is the Queen o' braid England
 That's come across the sea.'

'And O an it be England's Queen,
 She's welcome here the day ;
 I'd rather hae her for a friend
 Than for a deadly fae. 50

'Gae, kill the eeroock in the yard,
 The auld sow in the sty,
 And bake for her the brockit calf,
 But and the puddock-pie!'

And he has gane until the ship,
 As sune as it drew near,
 And he has ta'en her by the hand—
 'Ye're kindly welcome here!' 60

And syne he kissed her on ae cheek,
 And syne upon the ither ;
 And he ca'd her his sister dear,
 And she ca'd him her brither.

'Light down, light down now, ladye mine,
 Light down upon the shore ;
 Nae English king has trodden here
 This thousand years and more.'

'And gin I lighted on your land,
 As light fu' weel I may, 70
 O am I free to feast wi' you,
 And free to come and gae?'
 And he has sworn by the Haly Rood,
 And the black stane o' Dumblane.
 That she is free to come and gae
 Till twenty days are gane.
 'I've lippened to a Frenchman's aith,'
 Said gude Lord Aberdeen;
 'But I'll never lippen to it again,
 Sae lang's the grass is green. 80
 'Yet gae your ways, my sovereign liege,
 Sin' better mayna be;
 The wee bit bairns are safe at hame.
 By the blessing o' Marie!'
 Then down she lighted frae the ship,
 She lighted safe and sound;
 And glad was our good Prince Albert
 To step upon the ground.
 'Is that your Queen, my Lord,' she said,
 'That auld and buirdly dame? 90
 I see the crown upon her heid;
 But I dinna ken her name.'
 And she has kissed the Frenchman's Queen,
 And eke her daughters three,
 And gien her hand to the young Princess,
 That louted upon the knee.
 And she has gane to the proud castle.
 That's biggit beside the sea:
 But aye, when she thought o' the bairns at hame.
 The tear was in her ee. 100
 She gied the King the Cheshire cheese,
 But and the porter fine;
 And he gied her the puddock-pies,
 But and the blude-red wine.
 Then up and spak the dourest Prince,
 'An admiral was he;
 'Let's keep the Queen o' England here,
 Sin' better mayna be.
 'O mony is the dainty king
 That we hae trappit here; 110
 And mony is the English yerl
 That's in our dungeons drear!'

'You lee, you lee, ye graceless loon,
 Sae loud's I hear ye lee!
 There never yet was Englishman
 That came to skaith by me.
 'Gae oot, gae oot, ye fause traitour!
 Gae oot until the street;
 It's shame that Kings and Queens should sit
 Wi' sic a knave at meat!' 120
 Then up and raise the young French lord,
 In wrath and hie disdain—
 'O ye may sit, and ye may eat
 Your puddock-pies alane!
 'But were I in my ain gude ship,
 And sailing wi' the wind,
 And did I meet wi' auld Napier,
 I'd tell him o' my mind.'
 O then the Queen leuch loud and lang,
 And her colour went and came; 130
 'Gin ye meet wi' Charlie on the sea,
 Ye'd wish yersel at hame!
 And aye they birlit at the wine,
 And drank richt merrilie,
 Till the auld cock crawled in the castle-yard,
 And the abbey bell struck three.
 The Queen she gaed until her bed,
 And Prince Albert likewise;
 And the last word that gay ladye said
 Was—'O thae puddock-pies!' 140

PART II

The sun was high within the lift
 Afore the French King raise;
 And syne he loup'd intil his sark,
 And warslit on his claes.
 'Gae up, gae up, my little foot-page,
 Gae up until the toun;
 And gin ye meet wi' the auld harper,
 Be sure ye bring him doun.'

117, 118 oot] out 1843, 1845, 1849² traitour] traitor 1843,
 1845, 1849² 131 meet] met in all earlier versions
 134 richt] right in all earlier versions 141 high] hie 1843,
 1845 143 intil] until 1843, 1845

THE QUEEN IN FRANCE

237

And he has met wi' the auld harper;
O but his een were reid;
And the bizzing o' a swarm o' bees
Was singing in his heid.

150

'Alack! alack!' the harper said,
'That this should e'er hae been!
I daurna gang before my liege,
For I was fou yestreen.'

'It's ye maun come, ye auld harper:
Ye daurna tarry lang;
The King is just dementit-like
For wanting o' a sang.'

160

And when he came to the King's chamber,
He loutit on his knee,
'O what may be your gracious will
Wi' an auld frail man like me?'

'I want a sang, harper,' he said,
'I want a sang richt speedilie;
And gin ye dinna make a sang,
I'll hang ye up on the gallows tree.'

'I canna do't, my liege,' he said,
'Hae mercy on my auld grey hair!
But gin that I had got the words,
I think that I might mak the air.'

170

'And wha's to mak the words, fause loon,
When minstrels we have barely twa;
And Lamartine is in Paris toun,
And Victor Hugo far awa?'

'The deil may gang for Lamartine,
And flee awa wi' auld Hugo,
For a better minstrel than them baith
Within this very toun I know.'

180

'O kens my liege the gude Walter,
At hame they ca' him BON GAULTIER?
He'll rhyme ony day wi' True Thomas,
And he is in the castle here.'

The French King first he lauchit loud,
And syne did he begin to sing;
'My een are auld, and my heart is cauld,
Or I suld hae known the minstrels' King.'

150 reid] red 1848, 1845, 1849² 169 canna] cannot 1549²,
555 178 flee] fie in all earlier versions

'Gae take to him this ring o' gowd,
 And this mantle o' the silk sae fine, 190
 And bid him mak a maister sang
 For his sovereign ladye's sake and mine.'

'I winna take the gowden ring,
 Nor yet the mantle fine:
 But I'll mak the sang for my ladye's sake,
 And for a cup of wine.'

The Queen was sitting at the cards,
 The King ahint her back;
 And aye she dealed the red honours,
 And aye she dealed the black; 200
 And syne unto the dourest Prince
 She spak richt courteouslie;—
 'Now will ye play, Lord Admiral,
 Now will ye play wi' me?'

The dourest Prince he bit his lip,
 And his brow was black as glaur;
 'The only game that e'er I play
 Is the bluidy game o' war!'
 'And gin ye play at that, young man,
 It weel may cost ye sair; 210
 Ye'd better stick to the game at cards,
 For you'll win nae honours there!'

The King he leuch, and the Queen she leuch,
 Till the tears ran blithely down;
 But the Admiral he raved and swore,
 Till they kicked him frae the room.

The Harper came, and the Harper sang,
 And O but they were fain;
 For when he had sung the gude sang twice,
 They called for it again. 220

It was the sang o' the Field o' Gowd,
 In the days of auld langsyne;
 When bauld King Henry crossed the seas,
 Wi' his brither King to dine.

And aye he harped, and aye he carped,
 Till up the Queen she sprang—
 'I'll wad a County Palatine,
 Gude Walter made that sang.'

Three days had come, three days had gane,
 The fourth began to fa', 230
 When our gude Queen to the Frenchman said,
 'It's time I was awa!'

'O, bonny are the fields o' France,
And saftly draps the rain;
But my bairnies are in Windsor Tower,
And greeting a' their lane.

'Now ye maun come to me, Sir King,
As I have come to ye;
And a benison upon your heid
For a' your courtesie!

'Ye maun come, and bring your ladye fere;
Ye sall na say me no;
And ye'se mind, we have aye a bed to spare
For that gawsy chield Guizot.'

Now he has ta'en her lily-white hand,
And put it to his lip,
And he has ta'en her to the strand,
And left her in her ship.

'Will ye come back, sweet bird,' he cried.
'Will ye come kindly here,
When the lift is blue, and the lavrocks sing,
In the spring-time o' the year?'

'It's I would blithely come, my Lord,
To see ye in the spring;
It's I would blithely venture back,
But for ae little thing.

'It isna that the winds are rude,
Or that the waters rise,
But I loe the roasted beef at hame,
And no thae puddock-pies!'

THE MASSACRE OF THE MACPHERSON

(FROM THE GAELIC.)

[*Tait's Edinburgh Magazine*, August 1844. From 'Bon
Gaultier and his Friends']

I

FHAIRSHON swore a feud
Against the clan M'Tavish;
Marched into their land
To murder and to rafish;

241 Ye maun come . . .] This stanza appeared first in 1849.
244 that gawsy chield] your wily friend 1849², 1855 249 bird]
burd 1843, 1845

Title The Massacre of the Macpherson. (From the Gaelic.)
Mortadh Mhic-Fheairshon; or, The Massacre of the Macphersens.
1844

For he did resolve
 To extirpate the vipers,
 With four-and-twenty men
 And five-and-thirty pipers.

II

But when he had gone
 Half-way down Strath Canaan, 10
 Of his fighting tail
 Just three were remainin'.
 They were all he had,
 To back him in ta battle;
 All the rest had gone
 Off, to drive ta cattle.

III

'Fery coot!' cried Fhairshon,
 'So my clan disgraced is;
 Lads, we'll need to fight
 Pefore we touch the peasties. 20
 Here's Mhic-Mac-Methusaleh
 Coming wi' his fassals,
 Gillies seventy-three,
 And sixty Dhuinéwassails!'

IV

'Coot tay to you, sir;
 Are you not ta Fhairshon?
 Was you coming here
 To fisit any person?
 You are a plackguard, sir!
 It is now six hundred 30
 Coot long years, and more,
 Since my glen was plundered.'

V

'Fat is tat you say?
 Dare you cock your peaver?
 I will teach you, sir,
 Fat is coot pehaviour!
 You shall not exist
 For another day more;
 I will shoot you, sir,
 Or stap you with my claymore!'' 40

12 remainin'] remaining 1844, 1845 14 battle] pattle 1844,
 1845 17 coot] goot 1844, 1845 20 peasties] paisties 1844,
 pasties 1845 21, 45 Methusaleh] Methuselah 1844, 1845 26 you
 not] not you 1844, 1845, 1849² 28 fisit] visit in all earlier
 versions 29 You are] You're 1844, 1845 34 peaver]
 beaver 1844, 1845

THE MASSACRE OF THE MACPHERSON 261

VI

'I am fery glad
To learn what you mention,
Since I can prevent
Any such intention,'
So Mhic-Mac-Methusaleh
Gave some warlike howls,
Trew his skhian-dhu,
An' stuck it in his powels.

VII

In this fery way
Tied ta faliant Fhairshon,
Who was always thought 52
A superior person.
Fhairshon had a son,
Who married Noah's daughter,
And nearly spoiled ta Flood,
By trinking up ta water:

VIII

Which he would have done,
I at least pelieve it,
Had ta mixture peen
Only half Glenlivet. 63
This is all my tale:
Sirs, I hope 'tis new t'ye!
Here's your fery good healths,
And tamn ta whusky duty!

A MIDNIGHT MEDITATION

BY SIR E— E— L—.

[*Tait's Edinburgh Magazine*, May 1848. From 'Lays of the would-be Laureates. Contributed by Bon Gaultier']

FILL me once more the foaming pewter up!
Another board of oysters, ladye mine!
To-night Lucullus with himself shall sup.
These mute inglorious Miltons are divine!
And as I here in slippered ease recline,
Quaffing of Perkins's Entire my fill,
I sigh not for the lymph of Aganippe's rill.

60 Glenlivet] Glenlivet 1844, 1845 63 good] coot 1844,
1845 64 whusky] whisky 1844, 1845 64 duty] tuty
1844, 1845, 1849², 1855

Title E— B— L—] E. L. BULWER 1843

A nobler inspiration fires my brain.
 Caught from Old England's fine time-hallowed
 drink;
 I snatch the pot again and yet again, 10
 And as the foaming fluids shrink and shrink,
 Fill me once more, I say, up to the brink!
 This makes strong hearts—strong heads attest its
 charm—
 This nerves the might that sleeps in Britain's brawny
 arm!

But these remarks are neither here nor there.
 Where was I? Oh, I see—old Southey's dead!
 They'll want some bard to fill the vacant chair,
 And drain the annual butt—and oh, what head
 More fit with laurel to be garlanded
 Than this, which, curled in many a fragrant coil, 20
 Breathes of Castalia's streams, and best Macassar oil?

I know a grace is seated on my brow,
 Like young Apollo's with his golden beams—
 There should Apollo's bays be budding now :—
 And in my flashing eyes the radiance beams,
 That marks the poet in his waking dreams,
 When, as his fancies cluster thick and thicker,
 He feels the trance divine of poesy and liquor.

They throng around me now, those things of air,
 That from my fancy took their being's stamp: 30
 There Pelham sits and twirls his glossy hair,
 There Clifford leads his pals upon the tramp;
 There pale Zanoni, bending o'er his lamp,
 Roams through the starry wilderness of thought,
 Where all is everything, and everything is nought.

Yes, I am he who sung how Aram won
 The gentle ear of pensive Madeline!
 How love and murder hand in hand may run,
 Cemented by philosophy serene, 39
 And kisses bless the spot where gore has been!
 Who breathed the melting sentiment of crime,
 And for the assassin waked a sympathy sublime!

Yes, I am he, who on the novel shed
 Obscure philosophy's enchanting light!
 Until the public, 'wildered as they read,
 Believed they saw that which was not in sight—
 Of course 'twas not for me to set them right;
 For in my nether heart convinced I am,
 Philosophy's as good as any other flam.

Novels three-volumed I shall write no more— 50
 Somehow or other now they will not sell;
 And to invent new passions is a bore—
 I find the Magazines pay quite as well.
 Translating's simple, too, as I can tell.
 Who've hawked at Schiller on his lyric throne.
 And given the astonished bard a meaning all my own.
 Moore, Campbell, Wordsworth, their best days are
 grassed;
 Battered and broken are their early lyres.
 Rogers, a pleasant memory of the past.
 Warmed his young hands at Smithfield's martyr
 fires. 60
 And, worth a plum, nor bays nor butt desires.
 But these are things would suit me to the letter,
 For though this Stout is good, old Sherry's greatly
 better.
 A fico for your small poetic ravers,
 Your Hunts, your Tennysons, your Milnes, and
 these!
 Shall they compete with him who wrote 'Maltravers'.
 Prologue to 'Alice or the Mysteries'?
 No! Even now my glance prophetic sees
 My own high brow girl with the bays about. 69
 What ho! within there, ho! another pint of Stout!

LITTLE JOHN AND THE RED FRIAR

A LAY OF SHERWOOD.

[*Appeared first in 1849*]

FYTTE THE FIRST

THE deer may leap within the glade;
 The fawns may follow free--
 For Robin is dead, and his bones are laid
 Beneath the greenwood tree.
 And broken are his merry, merry men,
 That goodly companie:
 There's some have ta'en the northern road
 With Jem of Netherbee.

60 fires] 1843 has this footnote: Sir Edward has, by this fine
 line, fixed a date for Rogers' birth, which hitherto has been
 a desideratum in literary history. It was generally believed
 that the date of this event had perished in the obscurity of the
 middle ages. 65 your Milnes,] Mackays 1843 66 com-
 pete] dispute 1843 67 Prologue] Sequel 1843, 1845

The best and bravest of the band
With Derby Ned are gone :
But Earlie Grey and Charlie Wood,
They stay'd with Little John. 10

Now Little John was an outlaw proud,
A prouder ye never saw :
Through Nottingham and Leicester shires
He thought his word was law,
And he strutted through the greenwood wide,
Like a pestilent jack-daw.

He swore that none, but with leave of him,
Should set foot on the turf so free : 20
And he thought to spread his cutter's rule.
All over the south countrie.
'There's never a knave in the land,' he said,
'But shall pay his toll to me!'

And Charlie Wood was a taxman good
As ever stepped the ground,
He levied mail, like a sturdy thief,
From all the yeomen round.
'Nay, stand!' quoth he, 'thou shalt pay to me,
Seven pence from every pound!' 30

Now word has come to Little John,
As he lay upon the grass,
That a Friar red was in merry Sherwood
Without his leave to pass.

'Come hither, come hither, my little foot-page!
Ben Hawes, come tell to me,
What manner of man is this burly frere
Who walks the wood so free?' 40

'My master good!' the little page said.
'His name I wot not well,
But he wears on his head a hat so red,
With a monstrous scallop-shell.

'He says he is Prior of Copmanshurst,
And Bishop of London town,
And he comes with a rope from our father the Pope
To put the outlaws down.

'I saw him ride but yester-tide,
With his jolly chaplains three;
And he swears that he has an open pass
From Jem of Netherbee!' 50

Little John has ta'en an arrow so broad,
And broke it o'er his knee;
'Now may I never strike doe again,
But this wrong avenged shall be!

'And has he dared, this greasy frere,
To trespass in my bound.
Nor asked for leave from Little John
To range with hawk and hound?

'And has he dared to take a pass
From Jem of Netherbee, 60
Forgetting that the Sherwood shaws
Pertain of right to me?

'O were he but a simple man,
And not a slip-shod frere!
I'd hang him up by his own waist-rope
Above yon tangled brere.

'O did he come alone from Jem,
And not from our father the Pope,
I'd bring him in to Copmanshurst,
With the noose of a hempen rope! 70

'But since he has come from our father the Pope,
And sailed across the sea,
And since he has power to bind and loose,
His life is safe for me;
But a heavy penance he shall do
Beneath the greenwood tree!'

'O tarry yet!' quoth Charlie Wood,
'O tarry, master mine!
It's ill to shear a yearling hog,
Or twist the wool of swine! 80

'It's ill to make a bonny silk purse
From the ear of a bristly boar;
It's ill to provoke a shaveling's curse,
When the way lies him before.

'I've walked the forest for twenty years,
In wet weather and dry,
And never stopped a good fellowe,
Who had no coin to buy.

'What boots it to search a beggarman's bags,
When no silver groat he has? 90
So, master mine, I rede you well,
E'en let the Friar pass!'

'Now cease thy prate,' quoth Little John,
'Thou japest but in vain;
An he have not a groat within his pouch,
We may find a silver chain.

[87 fellowe] fellowe 1849²

'But were he as bare as a new-flayed buck.
As truly he may be.
He shall not tread the Sherwood shaws
Without the leave of me!'

100

Little John has taken his arrows and bow,
His sword and buckler strong,
And lifted up his quarter-staff.
Was full three cloth yards long.

And he has left his merry men
At the trysting-tree behind,
And gone into the gay greenwood,
This burly frere to find.

O'er holt and hill, through brake and brere
He took his way alone—
Now, Lordlings, list and you shall hear
This geste of Little John.

110

FYTTE THE SECOND

'Tis merry, 'tis merry in gay greenwood,
When the litle birds are singing,
When the buck is belling in the fern,
And the hare from the thicket springing!

'Tis merry to hear the waters clear,
As they splash in the pebbly fall;
And the ouzel whistling to his mate,
As he lights on the stones so small.

120

But small pleasaunce took Little John
In all he heard and saw;
Till he reached the cave of a hermit old
Who wonned within the shaw.

'*Ora pro nobis!*' quoth Little John—
His Latin was somewhat rude—
'Now, holy Father, hast thou seen
A frere within the wood?

'By his scarlet hose, and his ruddy nose,
I guess you may know him well;
And he wears on his head a hat so red,
And a monstrous scallop-shell.'

130

'I have served Saint Pancras,' the hermit said,
'In this cell for thirty year,
Yet never saw I, in the forest bounds,
The face of such a frere!

'An if ye find him, master mine,
E'en take an old man's advice,
And raddle him well, till he roar again,
Lest ye fail to meet him twice!'

140

'Trust me for that!' quoth Little John—
'Trust me for that!' quoth he with a laugh,
'There never was man of woman born,
That ask'd twice for the taste of my quarter-
staff!'

Then Little John, he strutted on,
'Till he came to an open bound,
And he was aware of a Red Friar,
Was sitting upon the ground.

His shoulders they were broad and strong,
And large was he of limb; 150
Few yeomen in the north countrie
Would care to mell with him.

He heard the rustling of the boughs,
As Little John drew near;
But never a single word he spoke,
Of welcome or of cheer;
Less stir he made than a pedlar would
For a small gnat in his ear!

I like not his looks! thought Little John,
Nor his staff of the oaken tree. 160
Now may our Lady be my help,
Else beaten I well may be!

'What dost thou here, thou strong Friar,
In Sherwood's merry round,
Without the leave of Little John,
To range with hawk and hound?'

'Small thought have I,' quoth the Red Friar,
'Of any leave, I trow,
That Little John is an outlawed thief,
And so, I ween, art thou! 170

'Know, I am Prior of Copmanshurst,
And Bishop of London town,
And I bring a rope from our father the Pope,
To put the outlaws down.'

Then out spoke Little John in wrath,
'I tell thee, burly frere,
The Pope may do as he likes at home,
But he sends no Bishops here!

'Up, and away, Red Friar!' he said,
'Up, and away, right speedilie; 180
An it were not for that cowl of thine,
Avenged on thy body I would be!'

'Nay, heed not that,' said the Red Friar,
'And let my cowl no hindrance be;
I warrant that I can give as good
As ever I think to take from thee!'

Little John he raised his quarter-staff,
And so did the burly priest,
And they fought beneath the greenwood tree,
A stricken hour at least. 190

But Little John was weak of fence,
And his strength began to fail;
Whilst the Friar's blows came thundering down,
Like the strokes of a threshing flail.

'Now, hold thy hand, thou stalwart Friar,
Now rest beneath the thorn,
Until I gather breath enow,
For a blast at my bugle-horn!'

'I'll hold my hand,' the Friar said,
'Since that is your propine, 200
But, an you sound your bugle-horn,
I'll even blow on mine!'

Little John he wound a blast so shrill
That it rung o'er rock and linn,
And Charlie Wood and his merry men all
Came lightly bounding in.

The Friar he wound a blast so strong
That it shook both bush and tree,
And to his side came Witless Will,
And Jem of Netherbee; 210
With all the worst of Robin's band,
And many a Rapparee!

Little John he wist not what to do,
When he saw the others come;
So he twisted his quarter-staff between
His fingers and his thumb.

'There's some mistake, good Friar!' he said,
'There's some mistake 'twixt thee and me;
I know thou art Prior of Copmanshurst,
But not beneath the greenwood tree. 220

'And if you will take some other name,
You shall have ample leave to bide;
With pasture also for your Bulls,
And power to range the forest wide.'

'There's no mistake!' the Friar said,
'I'll call myself just what I please.
My doctrine is that chalk is chalk,
And cheese is nothing else than cheese.'

LITTLE JOHN AND THE RED FRIAR 269

‘So be it, then!’ quoth Little John;
‘But surely you will not object, 230
If I and all my merry men
Should treat you with reserved respect?
‘We can’t call you Prior of Copmanshurst,
Nor Bishop of London town,
Nor on the grass, as you chance to pass,
Can we very well kneel down.
‘But you’ll send the Pope my compliments,
And say, as a further hint,
That, within the Sherwood bounds, you saw
Little John, who is the son-in-law 240
Of his friend, old Mat-o’-the-Mint!’
So ends this geste of Little John—
God save our noble Queen!
But, Lordlings, say—Is Sherwood now
What Sherwood once hath been?

THE RHYME OF SIR LAUNCELOT BOGLE

A LEGEND OF GLASGOW.

BY MRS. E — B — B —.

[First appeared in 1849.]

THERE’S a pleasant place of rest, near a City of the
West,
Where its bravest and its best find their grave.
Below the willows weep, and their hoary branches
steep
In the waters still and deep.
Not a wave!
And the old Cathedral Wall, so scathed and grey and
tall,
Like a priest surveying all, stands beyond,
And the ringing of its bell, when the ringers ring it
well,
Makes a kind of tidal swell
On the pond! 10
And there it was I lay, on a beauteous summer’s day,
With the odour of the hay floating by;
And I heard the blackbirds sing, and the bells de-
murely ring.
Chime by chime, ting by ting.
Droppingly.

Then my thoughts went wandering back, on a very
beaten track.

To the confine deep and black of the tomb.
And I wondered who he was, that is laid beneath
the grass.

Where the dandelion has

Such a bloom. 20

Then I straightway did espy, with my slantly sloping
eye,

A carved stone hard by, somewhat worn;
And I read in letters cold—~~here~~ . lyes . Launcelot .
ye . helde,

Off . ye . race . off . Bogile . old,

Glasgow . boruc.

He . wals . anc . balgaunt . knyghte . maist . terrible . in
fyghte.

Here the letters failed outright, but I knew
That a stout crusading lord, who had crossed the
Jordan's ford,

Lay there beneath the sword.

Wet with dew. 30

Time and tide they passed away, on that pleasant sum-
mer's day,

And around me, as I lay, all grew old:
Sank the chimneys from the town, and the clouds of
vapour brown

No longer, like a crown,

O'er it rolled.

Sank the great Saint Rollox stalk, like a pile of dingy
chalk;

Disappeared the cypress walk, and the flowers.
And a donjon keep arose, that might baffle any foes,
With its men-at-arms in rows,

On the towers. 40

And the flag that flaunted there, showed the grim and
grizzly bear,

Which the Bogles always wear for their crest.
And I heard the warder call, as he stood upon the
Wake ye up! my comrades all, [wall,

From your rest!

For, by the blessed rood, there's a glimpse of armour
good

In the deep Cowcaddens wood, o'er the stream;

And I hear the stifled hum, of a multitude that come,
Though they have not beat the drum.

It would seem! 50

'Go tell it to my Lord, lest he wish to man the ford
With partisan and sword, just beneath:

Ho, Gilkison and Nares! Ho, Provan of Cowlairs!

We'll back the bonny bears

To the death!

To the tower above the moat, like one who heedeth not,
Came the bold Sir Launcelot, half undressed;

On the outer rim he stood, and peered into the wood.

With his arms across him glued

On his breast. 60

And he mutter'd, 'Foe accurst! hast thou dared to
seek me first?

George of Gorbals, do thy worst—for I swear,

O'er thy gory corpse to ride, ere thy sister and my
bride,

From my undiscovered side

Thou shalt tear!

'Ho herald mine, Brownlee! ride forth, I pray, and
see,

Who, what, and whence is he, foe or friend!

Sir Roderick Dalgleish, and my foster-brother Neish

With his bloodhounds in the leash.

Shall attend.' 70

Forth went the herald stout, o'er the drawbridge and
without,

Then a wild and savage shout rose amain,

Six arrows sped their force, and, a pale and bleeding
corse,

He sank from off his horse

On the plain!

Back drew the bold Dalgleish, back started stalwart
Neish,

With his bloodhounds in the leash, from Brownlee.

'Now shame be to the sword that made thee knight
and lord,

Thou caitiff thrice abhorred,

Shame on thee! 80

'Ho, bowmen, bend your bows! Discharge upon the
foes,

Forthwith no end of those heavy bolts.

Three angels to the brave who finds the foe a grave,
 And a gallows for the slave
 Who revolts!'

Ten days the combat lasted; but the bold defenders
 fasted,

While the foemen, better pastied, fed their host;
 You might hear the savage cheers of the hungry
 Gorbaliars,

As at night they dressed the steers

For the roast. 90

And Sir Launcelot grew thin, and Provan's double
 chin

Showed sundry folds of skin down beneath;
 In silence and in grief found Gilkison relief,
 Nor did Neish the spell-word, beef,

Dare to breathe.

To the ramparts Edith came, that fair and youthful
 dame,

With the rosy evening flame on her face.
 She sighed, and looked around on the soldiers on the
 ground,

Who but little penance found,

Saying grace! 100

And she said unto her lord, as he leaned upon his
 sword,

'One short and little word may I speak?
 I cannot bear to view those eyes so ghastly blue,
 Or mark the sallow hue

Of thy cheek!

I know the rage and wrath that my furious brother
 hath

Is less against us both than at me.

Then, dearest, let me go to find among the foe
 An arrow from the bow,

Like Brownlee!' 110

'I would soil my father's name, I would lose my
 treasured fame,

Ladye mine, should such a shame on me light:
 While I wear a belted brand, together still we stand,
 Heart to heart, hand in hand!

Said the knight.

'All our chances are not lost, as your brother and
 his host

Shall discover to their cost rather hard!

Ho, Provan! take this key—hoist up the Malvoisie,
 And heap it, d'ye see,

In the yard.

'Of usquebaugh and rum, you will find, I reckon,
 some,
 Besides the beer and mum, extra stout;
 Go straightway to your tasks, and roll me all the
 casks,
 As also range the flasks,
 Just without.

'If I know the Gorbaliars, they are sure to dip their
 ears
 In the very inmost tiers of the drink.
 Let them win the outer-court, and hold it for their
 sport,
 Since their time is rather short.
 I should think!' 130

With a loud triumphant yell, as the heavy draw-
 bridge fell,
 Rushed the Gorbaliars pell-mell, wild as Druids:
 Mad with thirst for human gore, how they threatened
 and they swore,
 Till they stumbled on the floor.
 O'er the fluids!

Down their weapons then they threw, and each
 savage soldier drew
 From his belt an iron screw, in his fist:
 George of Gorbals found it vain their excitement to
 restrain,
 And indeed was rather fain
 To assist. 140

With a beaker in his hand, in the midst he took his
 stand.
 And silence did command, all below—
 'Ho! Launcelot the bold, ere thy lips are icy cold,
 In the centre of thy hold,
 Pledge me now!

'Art surly, brother mine? In this cup of rosy wine,
 I drink to the decline of thy race!
 Thy proud career is done, thy sand is nearly run,
 Never more shall setting sun
 Gild thy face! 150

'The pilgrim in amaze, shall see a goodly blaze,
 Ere the pallid morning rays flicker up.
 And perchance he may espy certain corpses swinging
 high!
 What, brother! art thou dry?
 Fill my cup!'

Dumb as death stood Launcelot, as though he heard
him not.

But his bosom Provan smote, and he swore:
And Sir Roderick Dalgleish remarked aside to Neish,
'Never sure did thirsty fish

Swallow more! 160

'Thirty casks are nearly done, yet the revel's scarce
begun,

It were knightly sport and fun to strike in!'
'Nay, tarry till they come,' quoth Neish, 'unto the
rum—

They are working at the mum.

And the gin!'

Then straight there did appear to each gallant
Gorbalier

Twenty castles dancing near, all around;
The solid earth did shake, and the stones beneath
them quake,

And sinuous as a snake

Moved the ground. 170

Why and wherefore they had come, seemed intricate
to some,

But all agreed the rum was divine.
And they looked with bitter scorn on their leader
highly born,

Who preferred to fill his horn

Up with wine!

Then said Launcelot the tall, 'Bring the chargers
from their stall;

Lead them straight unto the hall, down below:
Draw your weapons from your side, fling the gates
asunder wide,

And together we shall ride

On the foe! 180

Then Provan knew full well as he leaped into his
selle,

That few would 'scape to tell how they fared,
And Gilkison and Nares, both mounted on their
mares,

Looked terrible as bears,

All prepared.

With his bloodhounds in the leash, stood the iron-
sinewed Neish,

And the falchion of Dalgleish glittered bright—

'Now, wake the trumpet's blast; and, comrades, follow
fast;

Smite them down unto the last!'

Cried the knight. 190

In the cumbered yard without, there was shriek, and
yell, and shout,

As the warriors wheeled about, all in mail.

On the miserable kerne, fell the death-strokes stiff and
stern,

As the deer treads down the fern.

In the vale!

Saint Mungo be my guide! It was goodly in that
tide

To see the Bogle ride in his haste;

He accompanied each blow, with a cry of 'Ha!' or
'Ho!'

And always cleft the foe

To the waist. 200

'George of Gorbals—craven lord! thou didst threat
me with the cord,

Come forth and brave my sword, if you dare!'

But he met with no reply, and never could descry

The glitter of his eye

Anywhere.

Ere the dawn of morning shone, all the Gorbaliars
were down.

Like a field of barley mown in the ear:

It had done a soldier good, to see how Provan stood.

With Neish all bathed in blood.

Panting near. 210

'Now ply ye to your tasks—go carry down those
casks.

And place the empty flasks on the floor.

George of Gorbals scarce will come, with trumpet and
with drum.

To taste our beer and rum

Any more!'

So they plied them to their tasks, and they carried
down the casks.

And replaced the empty flasks on the floor;

But pallid for a week was the cellar-master's cheek.

For he swore he heard a shriek

Through the door. 220

When the merry Christmas came, and the Yule-log
lent its flame

To the face of squire and dame in the hall,

The cellarer went down to tap October brown,
Which was rather of renown
'Mongst them all.

He placed the spigot low, and gave the cask a blow,
But his liquor would not flow through the pin.
'Sure, 'tis sweet as honeysuckles!' so he rapped it
with his knuckles.
But a sound, as if of buckles,

Clashed within. 230

'Bring a hatchet, varlets, here!' and they cleft the
cask of beer:

What a spectacle of fear met their sight!
There George of Gorbals lay, skull and bones all
blanched and grey.
In the arms he bore the day
Of the fight!

I have sung this ancient tale, not, I trust, without
avail.

Though the moral ye may fail to perceive;
Sir Launcelot is dust, and his gallant sword is rust,
And now, I think, I must

Take my leave! 240

TARQUIN AND THE AUGUR

[*Tait's Edinburgh Magazine*, October 1843. From 'Puffs and Poetry.' By Bon Gaultier.' 'In the divine stanza of Goethe's *Bride of Corinth*.' (1843). First appeared in book-form, 1849]

GINGERLY is good King Tarquin shaving,
Gently glides the razor o'er his chin.
Near him stands a grim Haruspex raving,
And with nasal whine he pitches in
Church extension hints,
Till the monarch squints,

Snicks his chin, and swears—a deadly sin!

'Jove confound thee, thou bare-legged impostor!
From my dressing-table get thee gone!
Dost thou think my flesh is double Glo'ster? 10
There again! That cut was to the bone!

Get ye from my sight;
I'll believe you're right,
When my razor cuts the sharpening hone!'

Thus spoke Tarquin with a deal of dryness;
But the Augur, eager for his fees,
Answered—'Try it, your Imperial Highness,
Press a little harder, if you please.

4 nasal whine] frantic mien 1843

7 chin] cheek 1843

There! the deed is done!
 Through the solid stone
 Went the steel as glibly as through cheese. 20
 So the Augur touch'd the tin of Tarquin,
 Who suspected some celestial aid:
 But he wronged the blameless Gods; for hearken!
 Ere the monarch's bet was rashly laid,
 With his searching eye
 Did the priest espy
 RODGERS' name engraved upon the blade.

LA MORT D'ARTHUR

NOT BY ALFRED TENNYSON.

[*Tait's Edinburgh Magazine*, October 1843. From 'Puffs and Poetry.
 By Bon Gaultier.' First appeared in book-form, 1849]

SLOWLY, as one who bears a mortal hurt,
 Through which the fountain of his life runs dry,
 Crept good King Arthur down unto the lake.
 A roughening wind was bringing in the waves
 With cold dull splash and plunging to the shore,
 And a great bank of clouds came sailing up
 Athwart the aspect of the gibbous moon,
 Leaving no glimpse save starlight, as he sank,
 With a short stagger, senseless on the stones.

No man yet knows how long he lay in swound;
 But long enough it was to let the rust
 Lick half the surface of his polished shield;
 For it was made by far inferior hands,
 Than forged his helm, his breastplate, and his greaves,
 Whereon no canker lighted, for they bore
 The magic stamp of MECHI'S SILVER STEEL. 11

THE HUSBAND'S PETITION

[*Tait's Edinburgh Magazine*, January 1844. From 'My Wife's
 Album. By Bon Gaultier']

COME hither, my heart's darling,
 Come, sit upon my knee,
 And listen, while I whisper
 A boon I ask of thee.
 You need not pull my whiskers
 So amorously, my dove;
 'Tis something quite apart from
 The gentle cares of love.

[*Title*] La Mort d'Arthur. A fragment. Not by Tennyson. 1843
 2 life] blood 1843 3 down unto] downward to 1843
 10 swound] swoun 1843

I feel a bitter craving—
 A dark and deep desire, 10
 That glows beneath my bosom
 Like coals of kindled fire.
 The passion of the nightingale,
 When singing to the rose,
 Is feebler than the agony
 That murders my repose!

Nay, dearest! do not doubt me,
 Though madly thus I speak—
 I feel thy arms about me,
 Thy tresses on my cheek: 20
 I know the sweet devotion
 That links thy heart with mine,—
 I know my soul's emotion
 Is doubly felt by thine:

And deem not that a shadow
 Hath fallen across my love:
 No, sweet, my love is shadowless,
 As yonder heaven above.
 These little taper fingers—
 Ah, Jane! how white they be!— 30
 Can well supply the cruel want
 That almost maddens me.

Thou wilt not sure deny me
 My first and fond request;
 I pray thee, by the memory
 Of all we cherish best—
 By all the dear remembrance
 Of those delicious days,
 When, hand in hand, we wandered
 Along the summer braes; 40

By all we felt, unspoken,
 When 'neath the early moon,
 We sat beside the rivulet,
 In the leafy month of June;
 And by the broken whisper
 That fell upon my ear,
 More sweet than angel music,
 When first I wooed thee, dear!

By that great vow which bound thee
 For ever to my side, 50
 And by the ring that made thee
 My darling and my bride!

Thou wilt not fail nor falter,
 But bend thee to the task—
 A BOILED SHEEP'S-HEAD ON SUNDAY
 Is all the boon I ask!

53 wilt] will 1844, 1845

SONNET TO BRITAIN

BY THE D— OF W—

[*Tait's Edinburgh Magazine*, December 1841. From 'Review of Unpublished Annuals']

HALT! Shoulder arms! Recover! As you were!
 Right wheel! Eyes left! Attention! Stand at ease!
 O Britain! O my country! Words like these
 Have made thy name a terror and a fear
 To all the nations. Witness Ebro's banks,
 Assaye, Toulouse, Nivelle, and Waterloo,
 Where the grim despot muttered—*Saurez qui peut!*
 And Ney fled darkling.—Silence in the ranks!
 Inspired by these, amidst the iron crash
 Of armies, in the centre of his troop 10
 The soldier stands—unmovable, not rash—
 Until the forces of the foeman droop;
 Then knocks the Frenchmen to eternal smash.
 Pounding them into mummy. Shoulder, hoop!

12 foeman] foemen 1841, 1845

THE LAY OF THE LEGION

[*Tait's Edinburgh Magazine*, August 1844. From 'Bon Gaultier and his Friends'. Reprinted in the *Memoir* 1867]

WHEN I was in the Legion
 A short time ago,
 We went the pace as pleasantly
 As ever you did know:
 The cares of life and warlike strife
 Were all, I ween, forgot.
 As we walked into the Sherry casks,
 And never paid a shot.
 For we bold lads of Evans'
 Went roving with the moon— 10
 Old Spain was made for the Newgate blade,
 And for the stout Poltroon!
 We wouldn't stand no drilling,
 Oh, that was all my eye,
 But did exactly as we pleased,
 And kept our powder dry.

We always fired, when 'twas required,
Behind a vineyard fence:
But as for open cut-and-thrust,
We'd rather too much sense. 20
For we bold lads of Evans'
Marched to another tune,
And 'right about!' was still the shout
That moved the stout Poltroon!

How jolly looked the Convent!
And, blow me, what a din
The nuns and Lady Abbess made.
As we came thundering in!
What screams and squalls rung through the walls,
'Twas like to deafen me. 30
When our Captain took his helmet off,
And begged the cellar key!
Then we bold lads of Evans'
Got tipsy very soon,—
And if the brave will misbehave,
Why not a stout Poltroon?

O me, that glorious Legion!
If I were there again,
I would not leave an ounce of plate
In any house in Spain. 40
I'd fake away, the livelong day,
And drink till all was blue;
For a happier life I could not lead.
No more, my lads, could you,
Than to be a boy of Evans',
No milk-and-water spoon.
And crack the flasks and drain the casks
Like a regular Poltroon!

THE GOLDEN AGE

'Money is plentiful, and may be had cheap.'—*City Article*.
[Blackwood's Magazine, November, 1852, anonymously.
Ascribed to Aytoun in the Memoir, 1867.]

'MONEY abundant, at an easy rate !'
 Hear *that*, ye Nine, dull guardians of my fate !
 Old maids of Pindus, ye who used to dwell
 On the green slopes by Aganippe's well ;
 Ye, from whose lessons sapient Virgil drew
 The art to sing, and fill his pockets too ;
 Ye, who to Horace such enchantment gave,
 That e'en the rich Maecenas was his slave ;
 Aid me—the last, in these degenerate times,
 That stoutly strives to drive a trade in rhymes— 10
 Aid me, for once, with all your mystic power,
 To catch some sprinkling of this golden shower,
 Ere yet, as prophets of the market say,
 The deluge sweeps all dividends away.
 Ere Long Annuities and Three per Cents
 Partake the dismal fall of landed rents !

O swift Pactolus, on whose sunny shore
 The poets loved to meditate of yore—
 Tagus, whose waters, ere they reached the main,
 Left a rich tribute of the sparkling grain— 20
 Ganges, and Pison, where the gold was good,
 And thou, Euphrates, Eden's barrier flood—
 Your old renown has faded to a dream ;
 Your glory past to a barbarian stream.
 Midas and Croesus, kings ! ye both were poor
 Compared with him, the strong Australian boor,
 Who, with one blow, compels the rock to yield
 More gold than rested in the Lydian field.
 Who asks in this, our more prolific day,
 Where Ophir's mines, once wrought by Israel, lay ?
 Consult the *Times*—it points a ready road 30
 To the true temples of the Golden God.
 For San Francisco, ho !—or, should you quail,
 Why, for Port Philip there are fifty sail.
 A clipper leaves next week—she's tight and sound.
 The cabin fare is only twenty pound.
 Sell all you have, and seek that blessed shore,
 Which, 'stead of pebble-stones, yields precious ore ;
 Where the wild bushman eats his loathly fare,
 Upon a rock, more rich than David's chair, 40
 One of you Nine, awake ! I need a Muse
 To sing the land of kites and kangaroos,

Where nature, passing from the primal curse,
Has furnished e'en dumb creatures with a purse,
And given the rank opossum of the vale
A more convenient sporran than the Gael.

Once on a time—'tis thus that empires rise,
For Rome, whose eagles mounted to the skies,
Owed her foundation to a robber clan,
The very refuse and reproach of man— 50
Once on a time we sent whate'er was vile,
From the pure precincts of our northern isle,
To till untaxed, and free from aught save toil,
The countless acres of a virgin soil.
Was any branded with the mark of shame?
Another land received him all the same.
The hardy labourer, for his weekly wage,
Toiled on, unnoticed here, from youth to age,
Cheered by the hope that strength and manhood past,
The poorhouse gates might yawn for him at last. 60
But he, the young Colossus of the road,
Whose lust for plunder summoned him abroad,
Whose ardent soul aspired the path to tread
Pursued by Turpin and the glorious dead—
Or he, the low-browed wretch, obscene and sly,
Whose only thought was how to fake a cly;
Who never yet could earn an honest meal,
Or use his nimble fingers save to steal—
Their lot was better far. Across the sea
Their generous country sent them passage-free, 70
To hold sweet eclogues 'neath Australian skies,
And waken Sydney's groves with Fleet Street's cries.
A pastoral region, with a thriving flock,
Where sheep and convicts formed the staple stock;
Where tallow, wool, and Tyburn-talk combined
To raise the soul, and purify the mind.
Behold it now. Not he, the potent sprite,
Who reared Aladdin's palace in a night—
Not the Czar Peter, who, in mist and fog,
Called up his glorious city from a bog, 80
Wrought greater change than that surveyor old,
Who raised a yellow stone and found it gold!
Small, in the future years, must be thy fame,
My poor Columbus! Chiefs of former name—
Pizarro, Cortez—nought remains of you,
Save the deep curse of those you foully slew.
Hawkins and Raleigh—men of bygone years—
What were ye both but brilliant buccaneers?
Long since exhausted is the hoard you brought,
Scarce worth a banker's—not a nation's—thought. 90

Your broad moldores have dwindled into groats ;
 Your spoils have suffered change to paper notes.
 One Jew alone, for one election day
 Would your whole precious El Dorado pay.

Phantoms, avaunt ! Let Plutus take his stand,
 With one foot steady on Australian land ;
 Let him his veins of native wealth display,
 And call the human vultures to their prey.
 No need of pressing. See ! from north and west,
 Adullam's inmates hurry to the quest. 100
 On every side, in Babel's speech is heard—
 'Where are the diggings ? What's the rate per yard ?'
 Ten thousand souls delve, fight, blaspheme, perspire.
 In nature's Lombard Street of mud and mire ;
 Swarming, like tadpoles in an April ditch,
 To rake the drainage, and at once be rich.
 The ships lie rotting on the idle strand—
 Jack hath levanted to the golden land.
 Unwatched the sheep may stray, the cattle roam :—
 None but a bonds slave, sure, would bide at home.
 To Capel Court the strong infection spreads : 111
 Once more the jobbers raise their eager heads.
 Back come the ravens who, in forty-seven,
 Were to Bologne or kindly Calais driven ;
 All undismayed by crashes on the rail,
 They scent the future carrion in the gale.
 In fungus-growth new companies arise—
 'Invest your coin, ye widows, and be wise !
 Make haste—delay not—shares are rising fast ;
 No empty bubble this, as was the last. 120
 Behold this lump of quartz with glittering veins—
 Nay, come and handle—it is worth the pains.
 Gold by the ton ! Who'll profit by the hint ?
 A whole Ben Nevis ready for the mint !
 The ground is purchased up, the rock surveyed—
 Two pounds deposit, and your fortune's made !'

The bait is cast, the gudgeons swarm in sight.
 Dear cousin Jonas, art thou prone to bite ?
 Bethink thee, coz, what sad mishaps befell
 The lines you loved not wisely but too well, 130
 When you and many more embarked in shares
 In that fell masquerade of bulls and bears.
 Gods ! how ye vaunted then. With what disdain
 Ye looked on labour and its patient gain !
 The thrifty wretch who sought to work by rule,
 Was, in your sage opinion, but a fool.
 The easy road to wealth was found at last ;—
 What need of toil when stocks were rising fast ?

Or if, at times, some faint suspicion came, 139
 That they who won, at length might lose the game,
 An oracle was near. From out his den
 The Delphic broker cheered the souls of men.
He knew the traffic tables—*he* could tell
 When royal Hudson meant to buy or sell;
 And—this was secret—if you wished to win,
 Now was the time to venture boldly in.
 A line there was—he durst not mention which—
 But, if you'd trust him, he would make you rich.
 Down below par its value had been driven— 149
 Next week the shares would rise to thirty-seven!

Too ready ink! O far too easy pen!
 Where was your guardian angel, Jonas, then?
 Did no misgivings haunt you when you signed
 For more than twice your father left behind?
 Had you no wholesome doubts—no lurking fear
 Of that sly serpent whispering in your ear?
 Heard you no warning voices in your sleep
 Repeat the adage—Look before you leap?
 Alas! against the chance of instant gain, 159
 E'en conscience makes her stern protest in vain!
 For one short month you saw your stakes augment,
 And reckoned up your gain at cent per cent.
 Brisk was the betting, as when gamblers set
 Their shifting gold at hazard or roulette.
 Then came the crash! And such a howl arose,
 As when a city's plundered by its foes!
 'Sell out at once!' was now the general cry—
 Vain the advice, for not a soul would buy.
 Behold in fits a valiant son of Mars—
 'Who'll purchase scrip?' For what? To light cigars?
 With shaking limbs the pale directors stood, 171
 Protesting faintly that their shares were good.
 'The dividend is sure, despite of falls.'
 Yea, but, my masters—*who's to pay the calls?*
 Yet wherefore dwell on those portentous years,
 Unblessed by any save the engineers,
 Who pierced the mountains, framed the iron way,
 Brought in their bills, and forced the rest to pay?
 Not ours in spite or malice to recall
 The frenzy-fit that ruined hearth and hall, 180
 Divorced broad acres from their luckless lord,
 And smote the merchant sharper than the sword.
 Nations, they say, go mad as well as men—
 Good, if a nation find its wits again!
 Yet still, though now diverted from the rails,
 'Twould seem that England's lunar mood prevails—

Still in her brain the wild excitement burns
 Of grand investments and of quick returns.
 The preacher reads the holy text aloud.
 Denouncing Mammon to the assembled crowd— 190
 The fervent congregation cries 'Amen!'—
 And straightway turns to Mammon's works again.
 I need not here the thrice-told tale repeat,
 Of nobles grovelling at a gambler's feet—
 Of hero-worship in Egyptian shape—
 Of idiots offering incense to an ape.
 Such things have been, and are; for wealth has power,
 And will retain it till earth's latest hour:
 Sages may mourn, and satirists may laugh.
 But aye there's homage for the Golden Calf. 200
 That common weakness, which but few despise,
 'Twere vain for me to brand or stigmatize.
 Still does the motley crowd on Dives wait,
 And none consort with Lazarus at the gate.

It may be true that, in the days of old,
 Our fathers, like ourselves, were bent on gold,
 And that the reverence which they also paid
 Regarded more the scabbard than the blade.
 Yet not till now—so I at least maintain—
 Was England's glory ranked beneath her gain; 210
 Her matchless empire, instanced as a curse
 By the mean guardians of the public purse;
 Her power curtailed on every vile pretence;
 Her safety styled a question of expense!

O men! O brothers! hearken—ere the grave
 For ever shuts upon the wise and brave—
 Why speak I thus?—on him, the greatest man
 That England knew since first her fame began.
 In youth, the keen Pelides of the war;
 In manhood, sager than Ulysses far; 220
 In age, like Nestor, honoured and revered
 By the proud chiefs his high example reared.
 Not yet for him has rung the funeral knell,
 They have not laid him in his narrow cell;
 Uncovered yet remains the stately head
 Of the gray warrior, grandest now, when dead.
 O, in that coming day of grief and gloom,
 When England's best shall bear him to the tomb—
 When every eye will glisten with a tear
 As true as ever wet a father's bier— 230
 O while ye gaze upon that honoured grave,
 Slight not the warning that his wisdom gave—
 Forget not that his latest prayer was given
 For our dear country at the gate of heaven—

For us and ours! O well for us to weep!
 He lies for ever in his glorious sleep;
 Nor drum, nor trump, nor hostile legions' tread
 Can now disturb the quiet of the dead.
 O well for us to weep! Let tears of shame
 Show that our mourning is not but in name. 240
 Have we not heard, and heard without rebuke,
 A base Thersites railing at the Duke?
 Have we not heard a cottonmonger's sneers
 At his hoar head and honourable years?
 Let that mean demagogue, with brazen brow,
 Dare to repeat his witless insult now!
 The very knaves that took his words on trust
 Would scowl upon him with supreme disgust,
 And spurn the wretch who durst at such a time
 Connect the name of Wellington with crime! 250

For ever quenched is that heroic light
 That beamed before us in the darkest night,
 Even as the fiery pillar sent to guide
 The hosts of Israel o'er the deserts wide.
 New times—new thoughts! We need some novel sage
 To rise, the fresh apostle of the age;
 Through human wit some wiser rule to teach
 Than that which severed nations by their speech.
 Lo, he is here! To sympathizing friends
 Her brawny blacksmith young Columbia sends; 260
 His voice yet raucous with the forge's fume,
 He mounts the platform graced by Joseph Hume—
 Swings his huge fists as with a hammer's bang.
 And shouts for peace in pestilent harangue.
 No common Vulcan our audacious smith!
 With frantic gesture and with furious pith
 He rails at kings, denounces nations' wars,
 And hurls his anvil at the crest of Mars!
 Big burly Quakers follow in his wake,
 And cotton lords—for exportation's sake. 270
 Loud be your wail, you diplomatic crew!
 Henceforth the world hath little need of you;
 Away for ever with your paper boats—
 Your quires of protocols and reams of notes,
 Your treaties framed by famous heads of yore,
 Your old absurd traditionary lore;
 Let Palmerston and Bunsen disappear,
 We need no statesmen of their kidney here!
 Our Congress rests upon a wider base;
 Its doors are open to the human race. 280
 Walk in, my friends! Nay—never stand in awe—
 You'll gain a hearing if you rail at law.
 No prudish audience this—propound your views;

Be pungent, not with humour, but abuse.
 Take Satan's method, which is simply this—
 To carp and snarl at everything that is.
 No better model can be kept in view;
 That shrewd reformer knows a thing or two.
 Some special texts are rather in his way.
 But they're not binding—so his prophets say. 290
 Honour the King—or Queen?—the thing's absurd!
 What's honour?—nothing but an empty word.
 And what's allegiance, but a quibbling phrase,
 Despised by freemen in those liberal days?
 Submit to powers that be? Ye gods! is't fit
 That any, save a bondsman, should submit?
 That doctrine surely none would dare to press—
 Old man, 'tis hardly safe to answer—Yes!
 Your faith was fashioned in an ancient school;
 Your life was spent beneath a different rule; 300
 The free compatriots of your early day
 Knew how to love, to honour, and obey.
 They duly worshipped at their fathers' fane,
 For them the democrat declaimed in vain.
 No weekly sheets of filth and lies combined
 Brought rank infection to the honest mind.
 They heard no canting doctrine from abroad;
 No miscreant stepped betwixt them and their God.
 They loved their country; proud were they to claim
 The old distinction of an English name: 310
 The Saxon blood ran warm within their veins—
 They hated treason, and they scoffed at chains,
 Not such the creed these noisy boasters bawl
 From platform, hustings, council-room, and hall.
 Wild with delight, they saw in neighbouring France
 The torches glaring and the sabres glance:
 When great King Mob arose in frantic raid
 Against the puppet monarch it had made.
 In haste, to hail the brotherhood of man,
 To Paris straight our rank reformers ran. 320
 'Are we not brothers?' 'Yea!' the blouses cried,
 'We all are brothers, and we'll all divide!
 Death to the rich! all property is theft!'
 Aghast our patriots listened—and they left.

Freedom we love, but freedom was not there.
 That foul Megaera, with the tangled hair,
 All blood besprent, and drunk with fiery wine,
 Bore little token of a birth divine.
 Yet hymns were fashioned in that beldame's praise.
 And London's minstrels shrined her in their lays;
 With gibbering glee the ghost of Thomas Paine 331
 Heard the old watchwords thrill the streets again,

And eager Chartists murmured as they ran—
 'The Age of Reason and the Rights of Man!'

Turn we from this unto our former theme;
 Be Gold again our topic and our dream.
 O thou mysterious witch, yept the League—
 Thou youngest born of Falsehood and Intrigue—
 Thou fairly-seeming, yet deceitful maid—
 Thou gay Calypso of the cotton trade,— 340
 Where is the promise now, the pledge secure,
 Once made by him, your lusty paramour?
 Why do the foreign nations still refuse
 To cancel customs, and relax their dues?
 Why do obnoxious tariffs still appear,
 Waxing in growth with each successive year?
 How comes it that America and France
 Bound not responsive to the proffered dance,
 But evermore, with sulky looks, decline
 To interchange their kindred hand with thine? 350
 Did you e'er hope—'tis time to ask it yet—
 To catch shrewd Jonathan within your net—
 Or coax our bearded neighbour, Despardieux,
 Quite to forget the fate of Waterloo?
 Unhappy female! if you did, 'twere vain—
 Nay, try your arts on Germany and Spain.
 The Don won't take your calicoes for wine,
 And black as thunder glooms the Zollverein.
 No bigots they to meet with surly scorn
 Your free proposals for their surplus corn. 360
 Your bosom bare, they'll fill it in a trice—
 Ah but, Calypso! why not fix a price?
 Like other jades, when warning is in vain,
 You risked the danger, and you lost the gain,
 And fain would meet the vexing question now
 With broad defiance brazened on your brow.

What has been done, is patent to us all;
 It may be, partly, done beyond recall.
 For frequent changes in those perilous times,
 Appear to statesmen little short of crimes; 370
 And the great art of whirling round the wheel,
 Has perished with its prime Professor, Peel.
 Yet not for that shall we, who recognize
 No special gift in League-anointed eyes,
 Renounce the right of judgement on the past,
 Or, scourging former follies, spare the last.

Production—Genesis—'tis all the same—
 That hath been argued in the works of Graham.
 If any still take interest in the text,
 Or on the question feel at all perplexed, 380

Let them consult the homogeneous views
 Conceived and uttered by the Border muse.
 One year it seemeth to the good Sir James,
 Such and so stringent are the farmers' claims,
 That—wheat reduced—the tenant, with a curse,
 Must quit the country while he owns a purse.
 Not so his notions in another year;
 Then, weak and flimsy all their claims appear.
 What formerly was right, is monstrous now,
 All change depending on the landlord's vow. 390
 A new idea comes without expense—
 'Where's your guano, fellows?—have you sense?
 'Tis mere delusion that you can't compete
 With Polish peasants in the growth of wheat.
 Don't talk of taxes and inclement skies—
 Reduce the rents? Why, Sirs, they ought to rise!
 And, hark ye—there's a lion in the path—
 The army—hem! Best not provoke its wrath!'

O many-sided councillor, farewell!
 On thee and thine we have not space to dwell. 400
 One passing tribute only it is fit
 To lay before the altar of thy wit.
 Not the chameleon with its hundred dyes,
 And instant gleams that mock the gazer's eyes—
 Not Proteus' self, when dettly bound of yore
 By Aristaeus on Emathia's shore.
 In rapid change of form could vie with thee,
 Consummate master of inconstancy!

Well, then, the novel law exerts its force:
 What follows next? Why, Exodus of course! 410
 No other issue could be seen or shown
 When foreign labour supersedes our own.
 Why till the soil, if profitless we reap?
 Who cares for that?—the people's bread is cheap!
 O strangest symptom of a thriving state,
 When countless thousands swarm to emigrate!
 When half a people gird their loins to fly,
 Not from oppression, but prosperity!
 What wild delusion tempts them thus to roam,
 Just at the time when trade is freed at home? 420
 Hope they, perchance, within their new abode,
 To live beneath some yet more liberal code?
 What seek our children in the Western soil?
 Mark the reply—'Protection for their toil!'

Whigs! if you ever pondered for an hour
 On aught save means to scramble into power—
 If, for a time, your thoughts could turn astray
 From prurient gloatings after future pay—

This Exodus, methinks, might well abate
 Your self-sufficient confidence of late, 430
 And force even reckless Russell to confess
 That Melbourne's notion was the wiser guess.
 Round Richard's object there was no disguise—
 It loomed distinct through multitudes of lies.
 All knew to what it tended—right or wrong,
 He had his purpose, and he kept it strong.
 And therefore I, who still detest his views,
 Dare not to him, in honour, to refuse
 Some glory in the deed, which furtive John
 Would fain appropriate to himself alone. 440
 Had Pharaoh kindly dealt with Jacob's race,
 Perchance they might have tarried in their place—
 Enriched the land that lay by sullen Nile,
 And borne Egyptian burdens for a while.
 But Pharaoh, acting on the liberal law,
 Demanded bricks, and yet refused his straw.
 Ramses and Russell both have pregnant claims
 In emigration's page to live as names;
 And, in the point of worth, 'tis hard to choose
 'Twixt those who scourged the Irish or the Jews.
 I'd like to ask—and answer it who list, 451
 Save that dull dotard, the Economist—
 One question which may well attention fix—
 When Israel left, who was't supplied the bricks?
 In science ages only count as hours;
 For 'bricks' read 'taxes', and the question's ours.
 Yet Industry, they say, is wholly free—
 It may be so with some, but not with me.
 Though poor the raiment that defends our backs,
 Not even scribblers 'scape the Income-tax. 460
 Why comes that hateful wretch, at stated times,
 To gauge my couplets and excise my rhymes?
 Why does he ravish from my mean abode,
 The hard-earned fruits of elegy and ode?
 No land have I, no mansion or domain,
 My only mine—a poor one—is my brain;
 And yet for brains there's no exemption made.
 Why am I taxed?—to bolster up Free Trade!
 No marvel all of us in wrath withstood
 The vile proposal of that bungler Wood— 470
 Phoebus be praised, he's out!—to tithe our stock,
 And shear more closely the Parnassian flock!
 To mulct the silent author, sure, is hard—
 Why not a tax on speeches by the yard?
 Why not amerce, on each successive night,
 The restless tongues of Gibson and of Bright?
 Apply the rule of 'profits drawn from trade,'
 To Ireland's patriots and their stout brigade!

Pluck Murphy's flowers of rhetoric in their bloom.
 And e'en extract a tax from Joseph Hume? 485
 What princely dividends would brilliant Grey
 In right of long colonial speeches, pay!
 And Chisholm Anstey, if he's vocal yet,
 Might in one year redeem the nation's debt.

Dear lady Muses, of experience hoar,
 Say, were your votaries handled thus of yore?
 Were Homer's Iliads reckoned line by line?
 Took Solon tithings of the art divine?
 Why pay for Pegasus, that steed forlorn,
 Who rarely ever tastes a feed of corn? 490
 Lo! in the name of all the tuneful trade,
 I, from my garret, supplicate your aid,
 From that bad eminence my earnest cries
 Can surely penetrate the neighbouring skies.
 O give assistance to your sons, I pray—
 Melt the responsive heart of Vivian Grey:
 Lead him to deal with men of wealth and gain,
 Not with us poor distractors of our brain!
 Else I, descending from my tall abode,
 Like other bards, perforce must roam abroad— 500
 Assume the rocking-cradle once again,
 Take up the shovel, and renounce the pen.
 Even now I listen, in my nightly dreams,
 To the hoarse purling of Australian streams;
 Mistake the amorous call of cats that woo,
 For the wild shriek of startled kangaroo;
 And deem the earliest Covent-garden cry,
 To be the digger's morning rhapsody!

Gold—gold! On every side I hear the sound!
 Somewhere, no doubt, the metal must abound. 510
 I pause and look, like Whittington of yore,
 Lest at my feet should lie the precious ore.
 But—woe the while—I have not found it yet;
 No more have many, gracing the Gazette.
 'Tis coming in, they say, both fast and free—
 Alas! I know it never comes to me.
 I meet no golden symptoms when I stop
 To eat, *sans* wine, my melancholy chop;
 Nor can I trace in any friend I join,
 Much augmentation of his stores of coin. 520

Who draweth near with such a piteous face?
 I know him now—a Whig that lost his place.
 A staunch adherent he, in every shape,
 Of the grand mysteries of wax and tape;
 A firm believer in the juggling plan;
 A steadfast, thorough-going partisan.
 Why prowls he now so late through Scotland-yard?
 Why to yon window turns his fond regard?

Why near that portal lounges he so slow?
Alas! methinks I comprehend his woe! 530
Even as the Peri of the eastern song.
At Eden's glorious gateway lingered long,
Though conscious in her soul that never more
For her might open that celestial door—
So now, his manly heart with sorrow big,
Before the Treasury stalks the banished Whig!
For him no more official tapers burn—
No pitying angel hints at his return;
No more shall he pursue at quarter-day,
The bounding steps of Russell and of Grey; 540
Or, deeply caring for his country's good,
Exchange responsive pleasantries with Wood.

Unhappy youth! why longer tarry here?
This place for thee is desolate and drear!
Nay, weep not so! that sob my bosom rends—
Follow your leader—seek your northern friends.
Behold, where undismayed by late defeat,
Your glorious chief forsakes his close retreat—
Achieves new victories on Albyn's shore,
And gathers burgess tickets by the score! 550
Hark! how his treble pipe, on Tay and Forth,
Thrills through the ardent patriots of the north—
Enlists fresh hordes of Bailies in his cause,
And from lethargic Provosts wrings applause.
No trumpeter needs he! That injured saint,
With soul superior to absurd restraint,
Sounds his own praise and ever more proclaims
His as the foremost of existing names!
See, while he utters no uncertain sound,
How keenly gaze his satellites around; 560
With Spartan valour how they cheer their guide—
A horrid hunger gnawing at their side—
Expectant of the day when, once again
That great commander shall resume his reign,
And, with a smile of triumph on his face,
Invite them back to Goshen and to place!

But now the evening shades are settling down—
A creeping fog invades the shivering town;
Clammy and cold the stones beneath my feet,
And hoarse the cry of minstrels in the street. 570
I'll hie me home, and lay my aching head
On the hard pillow of my truckle bed,
To dream, perhaps, of Danae in her tower—
Of Jove descending in a generous shower—
Of Shylock's tortures, and Gehazi's craft—
Of Crassus writhing at the molten draught;
And wake to own, with many a wiser sage,
That gold alone can make no Golden Age.

FIRMILIAN
OR
THE STUDENT OF BADAJOZ
A SPASMODIC TRAGEDY

BY
T. PERCY JONES

[1854, and now first reprinted.]

[The pseudo-review in *Blackwood's Magazine*, May, 1854 which anticipated this pseudonymous burlesque will be found in an appendix to the present volume, page 497.]

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

FIRMILIAN, *The Student of Badajoz.*

HAVERILLO, *a Poet.*

ALPHONZO D'AGUILAR, }

GARCIA PEREZ, } *Students, and Friends of*
ALONZO OLIVAREZ, } *Firmilian.*

CHIEF INQUISITOR.

An OLD INQUISITOR.

BALTHAZAR, }

GIL OF SANTILLANE, } *Familiars of the Inquisition.*

NICODEMUS, *Firmilian's Servant.*

PRIEST OF ST. NICHOLAS.

A GRADUATE.

Two GENTLEMEN of Badajoz.

CONFESSOR.

FABIAN, *Steward to the Countess D'Aguilar.*

APOLLODORUS, *a Critic.*

SANCHO, *a Costermonger.*

THE COUNTESS D'AGUILAR.

MARIANA.

LILIAN.

INDIANA.

The Scene of the Play is BADAJOZ and its neighbourhood.

FIRMILIAN

PREFACE

As several passages of the following Poem have appeared in the pages of periodicals, I consider it an act of justice to myself to lay the whole before the public. I am not at all deterred by the fear of hostile criticism—I believe that no really good thing was ever injured by criticism; and so far from entertaining an angry feeling towards the gentlemen who have noticed my work, I thank them for having brought me forward.

It is a common practice nowadays for poets to appeal to the tender mercies of the public, by issuing prefaces in which they acknowledge, in as many words, the weakness and poverty of their verse. If the acknowledgment is sincere, how can they expect the public to show them any favour? If it is a mere hypocritical affectation, it were better omitted. And the practice is unwise as it is absurd. What would we think of the manufacturer who should entreat us to buy his goods, because they were of an inferior kind, or of the tradesman who should deliberately announce that his stock was of a poor quality? For my part, if I conscientiously believed that my poetry was not worthy of admiration, I never would commit the impertinence of asking any one to read it.

There has been, of late, much senseless talk about ‘schools of poetry;’ and it has been said, on the strength of the internal evidence afforded by some passages in my play, that I have joined the ranks, and uphold the tenets, of those who belong to ‘the Spasmodic School’. I deny the allegation altogether. I belong to no school, except that of nature; and I acknowledge the authority of no living master. But, lest it should be thought that I stand in terror of a nickname—the general bugbear to young authors—I have deliberately adopted the epithet of ‘Spasmodic’, and have applied it in the title-page to my tragedy. It is my firm opinion that all high poetry is and must be spasmodic. Remove that element from *Lear*—from *Othello*—from *Macbeth*—from any of the great works which refer to the conflict of the passions—and what would be the residue? A mere *caput mortuum*. I differ from those who regard verse and poetry as being one and the same thing; or who look upon a collection of glittering conceits and appropriate similes as the highest proof of poetical accomplishment. The office of poetry is to exhibit the passions in that state of excitement which distinguishes one from the other; and until a dramatic author has learned

this secret, all the fine writing in the world will avail him nothing. *Cato* is perhaps the best-written tragedy in the English language; and yet, what man in his senses would dream of reading *Cato* twice?

I have been accused of extravagance, principally, I presume, on account of the moral obliquity of the character of Firmilian. To that I reply, that the moral of a play does not depend upon the morals of any one character depicted in it; and that many of the characters drawn by the magic pencil of Shakespeare are shaded as deep, or even deeper, than Firmilian. Set my hero beside Iago, Richard III, or the two Macbeths, and I venture to say that he will not look dark in comparison. Consider carefully the character of Hamlet, and you will find that he is very nearly as selfish as Firmilian. Hamlet is said to shadow forth 'Constitutional Irresolution';—my object in Firmilian has been to typify 'Intellect without Principle'.

If the extravagance is held to lie in the conception and handling of my subject, then I assert fearlessly that the same charge may be preferred with greater reason against Goethe's masterpiece, the *Faust*. I have not considered it necessary to evoke the Devil in my pages—I have not introduced the reader to the low buffooneries of Auerbach's cellar, or to the Witch with her hybrid apes—nor have I indulged in the weird revelries and phantasmagoria of the Brocken. I do not presume to blame Goethe for his use of such material, any more than I should think of impugning Shakespeare for the Ghost in *Hamlet*, or the Witches in *Macbeth*. I merely wish to show that the 'utter extravagance' which some writers affect to have discovered in my play, is traceable only to their own defects in high imaginative development.

If I am told that the character of Firmilian is not only extravagant, but utterly without a parallel in nature, I shall request my critic to revise his opinion after he has perused the histories of Mesdames de Brinvilliers and Laffarge, and of the Borgias.

I am perfectly aware that this poem is unequal, and that some passages of it are inferior in interest to others. Such was my object, for I am convinced that there can be no beauty without breaks and undulation.

I am not arrogant enough to assert that this is the finest poem which the age has produced; but I shall feel very much obliged to any gentleman who can make me acquainted with a better.

T. PERCY JONES.

STREATHAM, July 1854.

FIRMILIAN

SCENE I

FIRMILIAN *in his study reading.*

THREE hours of study—and what gain thereby?
 My brain is reeling to attach the sense
 Of what I read, as a drunk mariner
 Who, stumbling o'er the bulwark, makes a clutch
 At the wild incongruity of ropes,
 And topples into mud!

Good Aristotle!

Forgive me if I lay thee henceforth by,
 And seek some other teacher. Thou hast been,
 For many hundred years, the bane and curse
 Of all the budding intellect of man. 10
 Thine earliest pupil, Alexander—he
 The most impulsive and tumultuous sprite
 That ever spurned old systems at the heel,
 And dashed the dust of action in the eyes
 Of the slow porers over antique shards—
 Held thee, at twenty, an especial fool.
 And why? The grand God-impulse in his heart
 That drove him over the oblique domain
 Of Asia and her kingdoms, and that urged
 His meteor leap at Porus' giant throat— 20
 Or the sublime illusion of the sense
 Which gave to Thais that tremendous torch
 Whence whole Persepolis was set on fire—
 Was never kindled surely by such trash
 As I, this night, have heaped upon my brain!
 Hence, vile impostor! *[Flings away the book.]*

Who shall take his place?

What hoary dotard of antiquity
 Shall I invite to dip his clumsy foot
 Within the limpid fountain of my mind,
 And stamp it into foulness? Let me see— 30
 Following Salerno's doctrine, human lore
 Divides itself into three faculties,
 The Eden rivers of the intellect.
 There's Law, Theology, and Medicine,
 And all beyond their course is barren ground.
 So say the Academics; and they're right,
 If learning's to be measured by its gains.
 The Lawyer speaks no word without a fee—
 The Priest demands his tithes, and will not sing
 A gratis mass to help his brother's soul. 40

The purgatorial key is made of gold:
 None else will fit the wards;—and for the Doctor,
 The good kind man who lingers by your couch,
 Compounds you pills and potions, feels your pulse,
 And takes especial notice of your tongue;
 If you allow him once to leave the room
 Without the proper greasing of his palm,
 Look out for Azrael!

So, then, these three
 Maintain the sole possession of the schools;
 Whilst, out of doors, amidst the sleet and rain, 50
 Thin-garbed Philosophy sits shivering down,
 And shares a mouldy crust with Poetry?

And shall I then take Celsus for my guide,
 Confound my brain with dull Justinian's tomes,
 Or stir the dust that lies o'er Augustine?
 Not I, in faith! I've leaped into the air,
 And clove my way through æther, like a bird
 That flits beneath the glimpses of the moon,
 Right eastward, till I lighted at the foot
 Of holy Helicon, and drank my fill 60
 At the clear spout of Aganippe's stream.
 I've rolled my limbs in ecstasy along
 The self-same turf on which old Homer lay
 That night he dreamed of Helen and of Troy:
 And I have heard, at midnight, the sweet strains
 Come quiring from the hill-top, where, enshrined
 In the rich foldings of a silver cloud,
 The Muses sang Apollo into sleep.
 Then came the voice of universal Pan,
 The dread earth-whisper, booming in mine ear— 70
 'Rise up, Firmilian—rise in might!' it said;
 'Great youth, baptised to song! Be it thy task.
 Out of the jarring discords of the world,
 To recreate stupendous harmonies
 More grand in diapason than the roll
 Among the mountains of the thunder-psalm!
 Be thou no slave of passion. Let not love,
 Pity, remorse, nor any other thrill,
 That sways the actions of ungifted men,
 Affect thy course. Live for thyself alone. 80
 Let appetite thy ready handmaid be,
 And pluck all fruitage from the tree of life,
 Be it forbidden or no. If any comes
 Between thee and the purpose of thy bent,
 Launch thou the arrow from the string of might
 Right to the bosom of the impious wretch,
 And let it quiver there! Be great in guilt!
 If, like Busiris, thou canst rack the heart,

Spare it no pang, So shalt thou be prepared
 To make thy song a tempest, and to shake 90
 The earth to its foundation—Go thy way!
 I woke, and found myself in Badajoz.
 But from that day, with frantic might, I've striven
 To give due utterance to the awful shrieks
 Of him who first imbued his hand in gore,—
 To paint the mental spasms that tortured Cain!
 How have I done it? Feebly. What we write
 Must be the reflex of the thing we know;
 For who can limn the morning, if his eyes
 Have never looked upon Aurora's face? 100
 Or who describe the cadence of the sea,
 Whose ears were never open to the waves
 Or the shrill winding of the Triton's horn?
 What do I know as yet of homicide?
 Nothing. Fool—fool! to lose thy precious time
 In dreaming of what *may* be, when an act
 Easy to plan, and easier to effect,
 Can teach thee everything! What—craven mind—
 Shrink'st thou from doing, for a noble aim,
 What, every hour, some villain, wretch, or slave
 Dares for a purse of gold? It is resolved— 111
 I'll ope the lattice of some mortal cage,
 And let the soul go free!

A draught of wine! (*Drinks.*)
 Ha! this revives me! How the nectar thrills
 Like joy through all my frame! There's not a god
 In the Pantheon that can rival thee,
 Thou purple-lipped Lyaeus! And thou'rt strong
 As thou art bounteous. Were I Ganymede,
 To stand beside the pitchers at the feast
 Of the Olympian revel, and to give 120
 The foaming cups to Hebe—how I'd laugh
 To see thee trip up iron Vulcan's heels,
 Prostrate old Neptune, and fling bullying Mars,
 With all his weight of armour on his back,
 Down with a clatter on the heavenly floor!
 Not Jove himself dare risk a fall with thee,
 Lord of the panthers! Lo, I drink again,
 And the high purpose of my soul grows firm,
 As the sweet venom circles in my veins—
 It is resolved! Come, then, mysterious Guilt, 130
 Thou raven-mother, come—and fill my cup
 With thy black beverage! I am sworn to thee,
 And will not falter!

But the victim? That
 Requires a pause of thought—

I must begin
 With some one dear to me, or else the deed

Would lose its flavour and its poignancy.
 Now, let me see. There's Lilian, pretty maid—
 The tender, blushing, yielding Lilian—
 She loves me but too well. What if I saved
 Her young existence from all future throes, 140
 And laid her pallid on an early bier?
 Why, that were mercy both to her and me,
 Not ruthless sacrifice. And, more than this,
 She hath an uncle an Inquisitor,
 Who might be tempted to make curious quest
 About the final ailments of his niece.
 Therefore, dear Lilian, live! I harm thee not.
 There's Mariana, she, mine own betrothed,
 The blooming mistress of the moated grange.
 She loves me well—but we're not married yet. 150
 It will be time enough to think of her
 After her lands are mine; therefore, my own,
 My sweet affianced, sleep thou on in peace,
 Nor dream of ruffian wrong. Then there's another,
 That full-blown beauty of Abassin blood
 Whose orient charms are madness! Shall she die?
 Why, no—not now at least. 'Tis but a week
 Since, at the lonely cottage in the wood,
 My eyes first rested on that Queen of Ind!
 O, she of Sheba was an ugly ape 160
 Compared with Indiana!—Let her pass.
 There's Haverillo, mine especial friend—
 A better creature never framed a verse
 By dint of finger-scanning; yet he's deemed
 A proper poet by the gaping fools
 Who know not me! I love him; for he's kind,
 And very credulous. To send him hence
 Would be advancement to a higher sphere—
 A gain to him, no loss to poetry.
 I think that he's the man: yet, hold awhile— 170
 No rashness in this matter! He hath got
 Acknowledgments of mine within his desk
 For certain sums of money—paltry dross
 Which 'tis my way to spurn. I've found him still
 A most convenient creditor: he asks
 No instant payment for his fond advance,
 Nor yet is clamorous for the usufruct.
 How if, he being dead, some sordid slave,
 Brother or cousin, who might heir his wealth,
 Should chance to stumble on those bonds of mine,
 And sue me for the debt? That were enough 181
 To break the wanton wings of Pegasus,
 And bind him to a stall! Nor have I yet
 Exhausted half his means; it may be soon
 I shall require more counters, and from him

I may depend upon a fresh supply.
A right good fellow is this Haverillo—
A mine, a storehouse, and a treasury,
My El-Dorado and my Mexico—
Then let him live and thrive!

Are there no more?

O, yes! There's Garcia Perez—he's my friend, 191
And ever stood above me in the schools.
And there's that young Alphonzo D'Aguilar,
Proud of his Countship and Castilian blood,
He hath vouchsafed me notice, and I love him.
And there's Alonzo Olivarez, too,
That mould of Hercules,—he's near to kin
To Mariana, and his wealth accrues
Solely to her. I love him like a brother.
Be these my choice. I sup with them to-morrow.

Come down, old Raymond Lully, from the shelf, 202
Thou quaint discourser upon pharmacy.
Did not Lucretia—not the frigid dame
Who discomposed young Tarquin in her bower,
But the complete and liberal Borgia—
Consult thy pages for a sedative?
Ay—here it is! In twenty minutes, death;
The compound tasteless, and beyond the skill
Of any earthy leech to recognise.
Thanks, Raymond, thanks!

How looks the night? Thou moon,
That in thy perfect and perennial course 211
Wanderest at will across the fields of heaven!—
Thou argent beauty, meditative orb,
That spiest out the secrets of the earth
In the still hours when guilt and murder walk—
To what far region takest thou thy way?
Not Latmos now allures thee, for the time
When boy Endymion stretched his tender limbs
Within the coverture of Dian's bower,
Hath melted into fable. Wilt thou pass 220
To Ephesus, thy city, glorious once,
But now dust-humbled; and, for ancient love,
Make bright its ruined shafts, and weed-grown walls,
With molten silver? Or invite thee more
The still witch-haunted plains of Thessaly,
Where, o'er the bones of the Pharsalian dead,
Amidst the gibbering of the Lemures,
Grim women mutter spells, and pale thy face
With monstrous incantation? What! already
Shrink'st thou behind the curtain of a cloud 230
E'en at my looking? Then I know indeed
My destiny is sure! For I was born
To make thee and thine astral brethren quake,

And I will do it! Glide thou on thy way—
I will to rest—best slumber while I may! [Exit.

SCENE II

An Apartment.—*MARIANA and HAVERILLO.*

HAVERILLO.

You need not fear him, cousin; for I'm sure
His heart's in the right place. He's wayward, doubtless,
And very often unintelligible,
But that is held to be a virtue now.
Critics and poets both (save I, who cling
To older canons) have discarded sense,
And meaning's at a discount. Our young spirits,
Who call themselves the masters of the age,
Are either robed in philosophic mist,
And, with an air of grand profundity, 10
Talk metaphysics—which, sweet cousin, means
Nothing but aimless jargon—or they come
Before us in the broad bombastic vein,
With spasms, and throes, and transcendental flights,
And heap hyperbole on metaphor:
Well! Heaven be with them, for they do small harm;
And I no more would grudge them their career
Than I would quarrel with a wanton horse
That rolls, on Sundays, in a clover field.
Depend upon it, ere two years are gone, 20
Firmilian will be wiser.

MARIANA.

Yet you leave
The point on which my soul is racked untouched.
Men read not women's characters aright,
Nor women men's. But I have heard this said,
That woman holds by duty—man by honour.
If that be true, what think you of your friend?

HAVERILLO.

Why—honour is at best a curious thing.
A very honourable man will drive
His sword into the bosom of a friend
For having challenged some oblique remark, 30
Yet will not stand on honour when the road
Lies open for him to his neighbour's wife.
Your honourable man cheats not at cards,
But he will ruin tradesmen, and will sign
A vast abundance of superfluous bills

Without the means to pay them. Honour! humph!
No doubt Firmilian is honourable.

MARIANA.

Ay, cousin. But there's something more than that.
Honour in love—How say you? Do you think
That you can stand the sponsor for your friend? 40

HAVERILLO.

I never was a sponsor in my life,
And won't be now. My pretty Mariana,
You should have thought of all such toys as these
Ere the betrothal. You have given your word,
And cannot well withdraw. And, for your comfort,
You must remember what Firmilian is—
A Poet. He is privileged to sing
A thousand ditties to a thousand maids.
Nine Muses waited at Apollo's beck— 50
Our modern poets are more amorous,
And far exceed the stint of Solomon:
But 'tis mere fancy; inspiration all;
Pure worthless rhyming.—Soft you: here he comes.

Enter FIRMILIAN.

FIRMILIAN.

O joy! to see the partner of my thought
Together with the partner of my soul!
Dear Haverillo! pardon if, before
I join the pressure of my palm with yours,
I lay this tribute on my lady's hand.

HAVERILLO.

Well, we'll not fight about precedency.
And you have come in time. My cousin here 60
Was pressing me too hard.

FIRMILIAN.

Upon what point?

HAVERILLO.

Why, faith, to tell the truth—for I could never
Summon a lie to meet an exigence—
Nay, frown not, cousin!—She's inquisitive
About what men call honour. I have done
My utmost to explain it.

FIRMILIAN.

I am glad,
Dear Mariana, that you laid your doubt
Before so wise a judge. Not Badajoz,
Nor Spain, nor Europe, doth contain a man

So stainless in his mind as Haverillo ; 70
 And you shall pardon me for saying this
 Before your face, for I've especial reason.
 You've been to me a true and constant friend.
 When I had need of money ('tis no shame
 In a poor student to acknowledge this)—
 You have supplied me; and I come to-day
 To thank you and repay you. My old uncle,
 The Dean of Salamanca, has expired
 Quite full of years and honours, and has left 80
 To me, his nephew, all his worldly goods,
 Which are, to say the least, considerable.
 Therefore, dear Haverillo, let us meet—
 Yet not to-day,—because some time must pass
 Ere I receive the hoards—they say, enormous—
 Of that quiescent pillar of the Church,—
 But at the very speediest point of time
 I can select, that I may show my friend
 What love I bear him for his trust in me.

HAVERILLO.

You hear him, Mariana? Dear Firmilian!
 I'm prouder of thy love than if I were 90
 The king of Ormus! So your uncle's dead?
 Go you to Salamanca speedily?

FIRMILIAN.

If I am summoned, and they send me funds,
 I cannot choose but go—not otherwise.
 'Faith, this bequest comes at a lucky time,
 For my last ducat slumbers in my purse
 Without a coin to keep it company.

HAVERILLO.

Be that no hindrance. Here are eighty ducats—
 Take them. Nay, man; is't kindly to refuse?
 What a friend proffers, that a friend should take 101
 Without compulsion. 'Tis a petty loan
 To be repaid at your convenience—
 You'll vex me otherwise.

FIRMILIAN.

I'd rather dash
 My hand, like Scaevola, into the flame,
 Than vex my Haverillo! O dear heaven!
 If those who rail at human nature knew
 How many kindly deeds each hour brings forth—
 How man by man is cherished and sustained—
 They'd leave their carping. I will take your offer,
 And hail it as the earliest drop of wealth, 110

So soon to ripen to a glorious shower.
What says my Mariana?

MARIANA.

That she loves you
More for your yielding to your friend's desire,
Than if you held by pride.

HAVERILLO.

Well put, sweet cousin!
But, dear Firmilian, what hath chanced of late,
To make you such a hermit? You were once
Gay as the lark, and jocund as the bee;
First in good-fellowship, and ever prone
To wing occasion with a merry jest.
Now you are grave and moody, and there hangs
A cloud of mystery about your brow; 121
You look like one that wrestles with a thought
And cannot fling it down. Is't poetry
Hath brought you to this pass? How come you on
With your intended tragedy on Cain?

FIRMILIAN.

O, that's abandoned quite! The subject was
Too gloomy for my handling; and perhaps,
Out of absorption of my intellect,
It threw a shade on my behaviour.
Henceforward I'll be genial—take my place 130
With the large-hearted men who love their kind
(Whereof there seems a vast abundance now),
And follow your example.

HAVERILLO.

Well said, boy!
Anacreon crowned his hoary locks with flowers,
Blithe-hearted Horace chirped amidst his cups;
Then why not we? Right glad am I to find
You've done with dismals. Here's a little thing, now,
I wrote the other day, on love and wine,
Quite german to the matter. Will you hear it?

FIRMILIAN.

I would not listen to Apollo's lute 140
With greater rapture. But my time is brief—
I had a word to say to Mariana.

HAVERILLO.

I understand. You want to speak of love
In the first person? 'Faith I was a fool
Not sooner to perceive it! Fare you well—
Some other time, be sure, I'll claim your ear.

[Exit.

MARIANA.

O my dear love, what trouble rends your heart?
A loving eye hath instinct in its glance,
And mine discerns in yours a deeper weight
Than yon light-hearted creature could perceive. 150
What ails my own Firmilian?

FIRMILIAN.

Mariana—

I think you love me?

MARIANA.

Cruel! Can you ask
That question of me now? Three months ago,
Beside the gentle Guadiana's stream,
You asked it in a whisper, and I gave
No cold response.

FIRMILIAN.

Three months, my Mariana,
Are somewhat in a lifetime, and may give
Large opportunity for altered thoughts.
Three hours may change a sinner to a saint—
Three days a friend into an enemy— 160
Three weeks a virgin to a courtesan—
Three months a conqueror to a fugitive.
I say not this in challenge of your love,
But as a fixed eternal law of time
That cannot be gainsayed. I know you loved me,
When, by the gentle Guadiana's stream,
We interchanged our troth.

MARIANA.

And what hath chanced
Since then to make you doubt me? Have a care
Of what you say, Firmilian! Women's hearts
Are tender and impressible as wax, 170
But underneath there lies a solid fold
Of pride. You'd best be cautious!

FIRMILIAN.

Lo you now—
She makes me an accuser! Mariana!
My own, my beautiful—I'd rather doubt
The lustre of the star Aldeboran
Than the firm faith of thine unbiassed soul.
But I have enemies. It is the curse
Of genius that it cannot spread its wings.
And soar triumphant to the welcoming clouds,
Without a hateful cawing from the crows. 180
Mark me! I am not quite as other men;

My aims are higher, more resolved than theirs.
 And therefore they detest me. There's no shaft
 Within the power of calumny to loose
 Which is not bent at me. I am not blind
 With soaring near the sun. I know full well
 That envious men have termed me libertine—
 And, from the frank out-welling of my mind
 (Which never flowed from impulse save to thee),
 Have done me fearful wrong. And this it is, 190
 That racks my being. There's your kinsman now,
 Alonzo Olivarez—he makes free.
 I'm told, with my fair fame.

MARIANA.

You need not fear him.
 Surely you know Alonzo.

FIRMILIAN.

Yes. I know him
 As a strong fool, who, in his roystering cups,
 Does far more mischief than the veriest knave
 Whose power of satire makes his words suspect.
 There's no such libeller as your arrant ass!
 Men know he can't invent; and what he says
 Gains credit from his sheer stupidity. 200
 Hath he not talked of me?

MARIANA.

Indeed he has;
 But what he said escaped me.

FIRMILIAN.

Then I'm right!
 He's Garcia's mouthpiece; and I know the man
 That sets them on—Alphonzo D'Aguilar—
 Who swears you loved him once.

MARIANA.

If he does so,
 He's an unmeasured villain! What—Alphonzo?
 Had I ne'er seen thy face, Firmilian,
 And did my choice lie 'twixt a muleteer
 And that stiff scion of Castilian blood,
 I'd wed the peasant! Do you tell me this? 210
 O, now I understand their treachery!

FIRMILIAN.

And therefore solely have I tried thee thus.
 Dear Mariana, weep not! I perceive
 What hath been done. 'Tis an accursed world,
 Wherein bright things have little leave to shine

Without the sully of some envious hand.
 Henceforth be thou and I sole witnesses
 Against each other. Let us shut the door
 To all the outward blasts of calumny,
 And live by mutual trusting. Dry your tears! 220
 Or, if you will, weep on, and I shall count
 For every pearly drop with D'Aguilar,
 Making him pay the ransom with his blood.
 O that a caitiff's slander should have power
 To rack thee thus!

MARIANA.

'Tis gone—the storm has past.
 'Twas but a bitter hail-shower, and the sun
 Laughs out again within the tranquil blue.
 Henceforth, Firmilian, thou art safe with me.
 If all the world conspired to do thee wrong,
 And heap its ugly slanders on thy head— 230
 Yea, though an angel should denounce my love,
 I would not listen. From thy lips alone
 I'll hear confession.

FIRMILIAN.

And the penance, sweet—
 Make it no more than this. O balmy breath!
 [The scene closes.]

SCENE III

A Tavern.—ALPHONZO D'AGUILAR, GARCIA PEREZ,
 ALONZO OLIVAREZ, and FIRMILIAN.

PEREZ.

You take it far too hotly, D'Aguilar—
 All men are fanciful in love, and beauty
 Is as abundant as the open air
 In every region of this bounteous world.
 You stand for Spanish beauty—what's your type?
 Dark hair, vermilion lips, an olive tint,
 A stately carriage, and a flashing eye.
 Go northward: there's your Dutchman—he prefers
 Blonde tresses, dove-like glances, and a form
 Of most enticing plumpness. Then the Dane 10
 Is all for red and blue; the brighter colour
 Pertaining chiefly to the lady's hair,
 The duller to her eyes. For my own part,
 I love variety.

D'AGUILAR.

And so do I,
 Within its proper bounds. No grander show
 Could poet fancy in his liveliest dreams,
 Than a great tournament of Europe's knights,
 The free, the strong, the noble, and the brave,
 Splintering their lances in a guarded list,
 Before a balcony of Europe's dames. 20
 Oh, could I sound a trumpet and bring them here,
 In one vast troop of valour and renown!
 The gay light-hearted chivalry of France,
 The doughty English, and the hardy Scot,
 The swart Italian, and the ponderous Swede,
 With those who dwell beside the castled Rhine.
 Nor they alone, but with them all the flowers
 That send their odour over Christendom—
 The fair and blushing beauties of the lands
 From the far Baltic to our inland sea. 30
 By him of Compostella! 'twere a field
 Wherein a noble might be proud to die.

FIRMILIAN.

I am not noble, and I'd rather die
 At peace in my own bed. But, D'Aguilar,—
 Are you not too exclusive? I have read—
 For I have been a student of romance,
 And pored upon the tomes of chivalry—
 How, ere the days of mighty Charlemagne
 The South did glorious battle with the North,
 And Afric's atabals were heard to clang 40
 Among the thickets by the turbid Seine.
 Yea, I have heard of knights of old descent,
 Cross-hilted warriors, Paladins indeed,
 Who would have bartered all the boasted charms
 Of Europe's beauties, for one kindly glance
 Shot from the eyelids of a Paynim maid.

D'AGUILAR.

Firmilian, thou blasphemest! Never knight
 To whom the stroke of chivalry was given,
 Could stoop to such an utter infamy!

FIRMILIAN.

Your pardon, Count! When English Richard bore
 Upon his bosom the Crusader's sign,
 And fought in Palestine, he laid his sword 51
 Upon the shoulder of a Moslem chief,
 And dubbed him knight.

D'AGUILAR.

The greater villain he!
I've heard of that same Richard as a most
Malignant child of Luther.

FIRMILIAN.

Have you so?
Nay, then, chronology must do him wrong:
But that's no matter. Then you would exclude
All beauty from that tournament of yours
Which did not appertain to Christendom?

60

D'AGUILAR.

Doubt you the answer of a Christian peer,
Within whose veins the blood of old Castile,
Undimmed by peasant or mechanic mud,
Flows bright as ruby? Ha! what mean you, sir,
By asking such a question?

PEREZ.

Soft you now!
There's no offence. Let's hear Firmilian.

FIRMILIAN.

I knew a poet once; and he was young,
And intermingled with such fierce desires
As made pale Eros veil his face with grief,
And caused his lustier brother to rejoice.
He was as amorous as a crocodile
In the spring season, when the Memphian bank,
Receiving substance from the glaring sun,
Resolves itself from mud into a shore.
And—as the scaly creature wallowing there,
In its hot fits of passion, belches forth
The steam from out its nostrils, half in love,
And half in grim defiance of its kind;
Trusting that either, from the reedy fen,
Some reptile-virgin coyly may appear,
Or that the hoary Sultan of the Nile
May make tremendous challenge with his jaws,
And, like Mark Anthony, assert his right
To all the Cleopatras of the ooze—
So fared it with the poet that I knew.

70

80

He had a soul beyond the vulgar reach,
Sun-ripened, swarthy. He was not the fool
To pluck the feeble lily from its shade
When the black hyacinth stood in fragrance by
The lady of his love was dusk as Ind,
Her lips as plenteous as the Sphinx's are,
And her short hair crisp with Numidian curl.

90

She was a negress. You have heard the strains
 That Dante, Petrarch, and such puling fools
 As loved the daughters of cold Japhet's race,
 Have lavished idly on their icicles :
 As snow meets snow, so their unhasty fall
 Fell chill and barren on a pulseless heart.
 But, would you know what noontide ardour is,
 Or in what mood the lion, in the waste, 100
 All fever-maddened, and intent on cubs,
 At the oasis waits the lioness—
 That shall you gather from the fiery song
 Which that young poet framed, before he dared
 Invade the vastness of his lady's lips.

D'AGUILAR.

Spawn of Mahound! wouldst thou pollute mine ears
 With thy lewd ditties? There! (Strikes him.)

Thou hast the hand
 For once, of a true noble, on thy cheek ;
 And what the hand has done, it will defend.

PEREZ.

This is too much! Nay, D'Aguilar, you're wrong!
 Alonzo Olivarez—rouse thee, man! 111
 Lay down the wine-pot for a moment's space,
 There's a brawl here!

OLIVAREZ.

I wish you fellows would keep quiet, and not interrupt
 drinking. It is a very disagreeable thing for a sober
 man to be disturbed over his liquor. I suppose you are
 quite aware that I can throw the whole of you over
 the window in a minute. My opinion is that you are
 a couple of bloody fools. I don't know what you are
 quarrelling about, but I won't stand any nonsense. 120

FIRMILIAN.

You struck me, sir!

D'AGUILAR.

I did.

FIRMILIAN.

And you're aware,
 Of course, of what the consequence must be,
 Unless you tender an apology?

D'AGUILAR.

Of course I am.

FIRMILIAN.

Madman! wouldst thou provoke
 The slide o' the avalanche?

D'AGUILAR.

I wait its fall

In perfect calmness.

FIRMILIAN.

O thou rash young lord!
 Beware in time! A hurricane of wrath
 Is raging in my soul—If it burst forth,
 'Twere better for thee that within the waste
 Thou met'st a ravening tigress, or wert bound 130
 In a lone churchyard where hyaenas prow!l!
 I may forget myself!

D'AGUILAR.

Small chance of that.
 Words are your weapons, and you wield them well;
 But gentlemen, when struck, are not in use
 To rail like muleteers. You wear a sword, sir!

PEREZ.

Are you mad, D'Aguilar, to court a brawl
 Within the college precincts! Olivarez—
 Set down the flagon, and bestir thee, man;
 This must not be!

FIRMILIAN.

Nay, Perez, stand thou back— 139
 He hath provoked his fate, and he must die. (*Draws.*)

OLIVAREZ.

I'll score the first man that makes a thrust, over the
 costard with this pint-pot! If you needs must fight,
 fight like gentlemen in the open air; and at a reason-
 able hour. What right has either of you to disturb the
 conviviality of the evening?

FIRMILIAN.

A blow—a blow! I have received a blow—
 My soul's athirst for vengeance, and I'll have it!
 Come not between the lion and his prey. 148

OLIVAREZ.

To the devil with your lions! I suppose you think it
 safe enough to roar now? Once for all, if you can't settle
 this matter without fighting, fix some hour to-morrow
 morning, and take your fill of it. But here you shall
 not fight. What say you, Alphonzo?

D'AGUILAR.

He hath the blow, so let him speak the first.

FIRMILIAN.

Agreed! Until to-morrow, then, I'll keep
My rage unsated. Let the hour be eight;
The place, the meadow where the stream turns round
Beside the cork-trees; and for witnesses,
Perez and Olivarez. D'Aguilar—
If I should fail thee at the rendezvous,
Perpetual shame and infamy be mine!

160

D'AGUILAR.

Agreed! And I rejoice to hear thee speak
So manfully. If I have done thee wrong,
I'll give thee satisfaction with my sword:
You show at least a nobler temper now.

FIRMILIAN.

Fail *you* not, D'Aguilar—I shall not fail.

OLIVAREZ.

Well—all that is comfortably adjusted, and just as it
should be. Let's have some more wine—this talking
makes a man thirsty.

169

PEREZ.

No more for me.

FIRMILIAN.

Your pardon—I'd provided
(Not dreaming of this hot dispute to-night),
Some flasks of rarest wine—'Tis Ildefonso,
Of an old vintage. I'll not leave them here
To be a perquisite unto our host;
And, lest our early parting hence should breed
Suspicion of to-morrow, let us stay
And drink another cup. You, D'Aguilar,
Whose sword must presently be crossed with mine,
Will not refuse a pledge?

D'AGUILAR.

Not I, in faith!
Now you have shown your mettle, I regard you
More than I did before.

180

FIRMILIAN.

Fill then your cups.
Nay, to the brim—the toast requires it, sirs.
Here's to the King!

OMNES.

The King!

FIRMILIAN.

'Tis my last pledge. Fill up again—

OLIVAREZ.

Why don't you help yourself? The wine is capital.

FIRMILIAN.

My goblet's full. Drink to another King,
Whose awful aspect doth o'erawe the world—
The conqueror of conquerors—the vast
But unseen monarch to whose sceptre bow
The heads of kings and beggars!

PEREZ.

That's the Pope! 190

FIRMILIAN.

No—not the Pope—but he that humbleth Popes.
Drink to KING DEATH!—You stare, and stand amazed—
O, you have much mista'en me, if you think
That some slight spurting of Castilian blood,
Or poet's ichor, can suffice to lay
The memory of to-night's affront asleep!
Death hath been sitting with us all the night,
Glaring through hollow eye-holes—to the doomed
He is invisible, but I have seen him
Point with his fleshless finger! But no more— 200
Farewell!—I go; and if you chance to hear
A passing-bell—be it a comfort to you!
At eight to-morrow I shall keep my time.
See you are there!

[Exit.]

PEREZ.

I think the fellow's mad!
I held him ever as a mere poltroon;
But that same blow of yours, Alphonzo—'faith,
'Twas wrong in you to give it—hath prevailed,
Like steel against a flint. He shows some fire,
And seems in deadly earnest—what's the matter?

D'AGUILAR.

Don't ask—I'm sick and faint.

210

OLIVAREZ.

I'm not drunk, I am sure—but I have the strangest
throbbing in my temples. Do you think you could
get a waiter or two to carry me home? I feel as cold
as a cucumber.

PEREZ.

My brain swims too. Hark! what is that without?

[*The Passing-bell tolls, and Monks are heard chaunting the Penitential Psalms. Slow and wailing music as the scene closes.*]

SCENE IV

Cloisters.—Enter FIRMILIAN.

THIS was a splendid morning! The dew lay
 In amplest drops upon the loaded grass,
 And filled the buttercups hard by the place
 Where I expected fiery D'Aguilar.
 He did not come. Well—I was there at least,
 And waited for an hour beyond the time,
 During which while I studied botany,
 And yet my proud opponent showed no face!
 Pshaw! to myself I'll be no hypocrite—
 If Raymond Lully lied not, they are dead,
 And I have done it!

How is this? *(A pause.)* My mind
 Is light and jocund. Yesternight I deemed,
 When the dull passing-bell announced the fate
 Of those insensate and presumptuous fools,
 That, as a vulture lights on carrion flesh
 With a shrill scream and flapping of its wings,
 Keen-beaked Remorse would settle on my soul,
 And fix her talons there. She did not come:
 Nay, stranger still—methought the passing-bell
 Was but the prelude to a rapturous strain
 Of highest music, that entranced me quite.
 For sleep descended on me, as it falls
 Upon an infant in its mother's arms.
 And all night long I dreamed of Indiana.
 What! is Remorse a fable after all—
 A mere invention, as the Harpies were,
 Or crazed Orestes' furies? Or have I
 Mista'en the ready way to lure her down?
 There are no beads of sweat upon my brow—
 My clustering hair maintains its wonted curl,
 Nor rises horrent, as a murderer's should.
 I do not shudder, start, nor scream aloud—
 Tremble at every sound—grow ghastly pale
 When a leaf falls, or when a lizard stirs.
 I do not wring my fingers from their joints,
 Or madly thrust them quite into my ears
 To bar the echo of a dying groan.

And, after all, what is there to regret?
 Three fools have died carousing as they lived,
 And Nature makes no special moan for them. 40
 If I have gained no knowledge by this deed,
 I have lost none. The subtle alchemist,
 Whose aim is the elixir, or that stone
 The touch whereof makes baser metals gold,
 Must needs endure much failure, ere he finds
 The grand Arcanum. So is it with me.
 I have but shot an idle bolt away,
 And need not seek it further. Who come here?

Enter a PRIEST and a GRADUATE.

GRADUATE.

Believe me, father, they are all accurs'd!
 These marble garments of the ancient Gods, 50
 Which the blaspheming hand of Babylon
 Hath gathered out of ruins, and hath raised
 In this her dark extremity of sin;
 Not in the hour when she was sending forth
 Her champions to the highway and the field,
 To pine in deserts and to writhe in flame—
 But in the scarlet frontage of her guilt,
 When, not with purple only, but with blood,
 Were the priests vested, and their festive cups
 Foamed with the hemlock rather than the wine! 60
 Call them not Churches, father—call them prisons;
 And yet not such as bind the body in,
 But gravestones of the soul! For, look you, sir,
 Beneath that weight of square-cut weary stone
 A thousand workmen's souls are pent alive!
 And therefore I declare them all accurs'd.

PRIEST.

Peace, son! thou ravest.

GRADUATE.

Do I rave indeed?
 So raved the Prophets when they told the truth
 To Israel's stubborn councillors and kings—
 So raved Cassandra, when in Hector's ear 70
 She shrieked the presage of his coming fall.
 I am a prophet also—and I say
 That o'er those stones wherein you place your pride
 Annihilation waves her dusky wing;
 Yea, do not marvel if the earth itself,
 Like a huge giant, weary of the load,
 Should heave them from its shoulders. I have said it.
 It is my purpose, and they all shall down! [Exit.

PRIEST.

Alas, to see a being so distraught!
And yet there may be danger in his words, 80
For heresy is rife. Ha! who is this?
If I mistake not, 'tis Firmilian,
Mine ancient pupil!

FIRMILIAN.

And he craves your blessing!

PRIEST.

Thou hast it, son. Now tell me—didst thou hear
The words yon Graduate uttered ere he left?
Methought his speech was levelled at the Church.

FIRMILIAN.

I heard him say all Churches should be levelled;
That they were built on souls; that earth would rise
To shake them from its shoulders; and he railed
At mother Rome, and called her Babylon. 90
My ears yet tingle with the impious sounds.

PRIEST.

Ha—did he so? By holy Nicholas,
I'll have him straight reported! Dost thou think,
Good son Firmilian, he deviseth aught
Against the Church, or us her ministers?

FIRMILIAN.

I do suspect him very grievously.

PRIEST.

And so do I. We hold a festival
On Tuesday next, when the Inquisitor
Is certain to be present—it were best
Ere then to give him notice. Who shall say 100
That, like another Samson, this vile wretch
May not drag down the pillars of the Church,
And whelm us all in ruin? I am bound
To see to that. Son—Benedicite! [Exit.

FIRMILIAN.

On Tuesday next, when the Inquisitor
Is certain to be present?—Lilian's uncle?
That were an opportunity too rare
To be allowed to pass! For this same priest—
He is my old preceptor, and instilled,
By dint of frequent and remorseless stripes 110
Applied at random to my childish rear,
Some learning into me. I owe him much,
And fain I would repay it. Ha, ha, ha!

What a dull creature was that Graduate
 To blurt his folly out! If a church falls
 Within the next ten years in Badajoz,
 Nay, if a single stone should tumble down,
 Or a stray pebble mutilate the nose
 Of some old saint within a crumbling niche,
 His life will pay the forfeit. As he spoke,
 Methought I saw the solid vaults give way,
 And the entire cathedral rise in air,
 As if it leaped from Pandemonium's jaws.
 But that's a serious matter. I have time
 To meditate the deed. These cloister walks
 Are dull and cheerless, and my spirit pants
 For kind emotion. Let me pass from hence,
 And wile away an hour with Lilian.

120

[Exit.

SCENE V

A Wine Shop.—NICODEMUS and Two FAMILIARS.

NICODEMUS.

Not a drop more, gentlemen, if you love me!

FIRST FAMILIAR.

Nonsense, man! We have not had as much as would
 satisfy the thirst of a chicken. Another stoup here!
 And now tell us a little more about your master.

NICODEMUS.

Aha, sirs! He's an odd one, is Señor Firmilian.

FIRST FAMILIAR.

A devil among the wenches, I suppose?

NICODEMUS.

Mum for that, sir! I hope I am not the man to betray
 confidence. What I see, I behold; and what I behold
 I can keep to myself; and there's enough on't. What
 have you black-coated gentry to do with the daughters
 of Eve?

11

FIRST FAMILIAR.

Nay, no offence meant, Master Nicodemus—you are
 sharper than Pedrillo's razor! What—young blood will
 have its way! But you are happy in serving, as I hear,
 the most promising student in Badajoz.

NICODEMUS.

Serving, sir? Marry come up! I'd have you know
 that I am his secretary.

SECOND FAMILIAR.

Aha! Your health, Master Secretary! I fear me you have heavy labour. 19

NICODEMUS.

Don't speak of it! If you knew what I have to do—the books I have to translate from the Coptic, Latin, Welsh, and other ancient languages—you'd pity me. I sometimes wish I had never been familiar with foreign tongues. Learning, my masters, is no inheritance. And then, when you come to deal with the Black Art—

SECOND FAMILIAR.

Enlighten us, Master Secretary—what is that? 27

NICODEMUS.

The Black Art? Here is your very good health!—I wish you could see my master's room, after he has been trying to call up the devil! Lord, sir! there's no end of skulls, and chalk marks on the floor, and stench of sulphur, and what not—but I don't believe that, with all his pains, he ever brought the devil up.

SECOND FAMILIAR.

Take another cup.—But he tries it sometimes?

NICODEMUS.

Punctually upon Wednesdays—about midnight, when the whole household have gone to sleep. But he's not up to the trick: he never could raise anything larger than a hedge-hog.

FIRST FAMILIAR.

But he has done that, has he? 39

NICODEMUS.

Of course! Any one can raise a hedge-hog. But I'm not going to sit here all night seeing you drinking. I must go home to translate Plotinus, who was a respectable father of the Latin Church. Take my advice and go home too—you are both rather drunk. Where's my beaver? Don't attempt to offer me two, in case I put the phantom one on my head. I say—if there is a drop remaining in the bottle, you might offer it by way of courtesy. Thanks, and take care of yourselves.

[Exit.]

FIRST FAMILIAR.

What say you to this story? A clearer proof
Of arrant sorcery was never given
Unto the Holy office. 50

SECOND FAMILIAR.

It is complete.
 He raises hedge-hogs! That's enough for me.
[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE VI

*Exterior of the Cathedral of St. Nicholas.—Choir
 heard chaunting within.*

Enter FIRMILIAN.

How darkly hangs yon cloud above the spire!
 There's thunder in the air—

What if the flash
 Should rend the solid walls, and reach the vault,
 Where my terrestrial thunder lies prepared,
 And so, without the action of my hand,
 Whirl up those thousand bigots in its blaze,
 And leave me guiltless, save in the intent?

That were a vile defraudment of my aim,
 A petty larceny o' the element,
 An interjection of exceeding wrong! 10
 Let the hoarse thunder rend the vault of heaven,
 Yea, shake the stars by myriads from their boughs,
 As Autumn tempests shake the fruitage down;—
 Let the red lightning shoot athwart the sky,
 Entangling comets by their spooming hair,
 Piercing the zodiac belt, and carrying dread
 To old Orion, and his whimpering hound;—
 But let the glory of this deed be mine!

ORGAN and CHOIR.

Sublimatus ad honorem
 Nicholai presulis: 20
 Pietatis ante rorem
 Cunctis pluit populis:
 Ut vix parem aut majorem
 Haebat in seculis.

FIRMILIAN.

Yet I could weep to hear the wretches sing!
 There rolls the organ anthem down the aisle,
 And thousand voices join in its acclaim.
 All they are happy—they are on their knees;
 Round and above them stare the images
 Of antique saints and martyrs. Censers steam 30
 With their Arabian charge of frankincense,
 And every heart, with inward fingers, counts

A blissful rosary of pious prayer!
 Why should they perish, then? Is't yet too late?
 O shame, Firmilian, on thy coward soul!
 What! thou, the poet!—thou, whose mission 'tis
 To send vibration down the chord of time,
 Unto its junction with eternity—
 Thou, who hast dared and pondered and endured,
 Gathering by piecemeal all the noble thoughts 40
 And fierce sensations of the mind—as one
 Who in a garden culls the wholesome rose,
 And binds it with the deadly nightshade up;
 Flowers not akin, and yet, by contrast, kind,—
 Thou, for a touch of what these mundane fools
 Whine of as pity, to forego thine aim,
 And never feel the gnawing of remorse,
 Like the Promethean vulture on the spleen,
 That shall instruct thee to give future voice
 To the unuttered agonies of Cain! 50
 Thou, to compare, with that high consequence
 The breath of some poor thousand knights and knaves,
 Who soaring, in the welkin, shall expire!
 Shame, shame, Firmilian! on thy weakness, shame!

ORGAN and CHOIR.

Auro dato violari
 Virgines prohibuit:
 Far in fame, vas in mari
 Servat et distribuit:
 Qui timebant naufragari
 Nautis opem tribuit. 60

FIRMIAN.

A right good saint he seems, this Nicholas!
 And over-worked too, if the praise be just.
 Which these, his votaries, quaver as his claim.
 Yet it is odd he should o'erlook the fact
 That underneath this church of his are stored
 Some twenty barrels of the dusky grain,
 The secret of whose framing, in an hour
 Of diabolic jollity and mirth,
 Old Roger Bacon wormed from Beelzebub!
 He might keep better wardship for his friends; 70
 But that to me is nothing. Now's the time!
 Ha! as I take the matchbox in my hand,
 A spasm pervades me, and a natural thrill
 As though my better genius were at hand,
 And strove to pluck me backwards by the hair.
 I must be resolute. Lose this one chance,
 Which bears me to th' Acropolis of guilt,
 And this, our age, foregoes its noblest song.
 I must be speedy—

ORGAN and CHOIR.

A defunctis suscitatur
 Furtum qui commiserat: 80
 Et Judæus baptizatur
 Furtum qui recuperat:
 Illi vita restauratur,
 Hic ad fidem properat.

FIRMILIAN.

No more was needed to confirm my mind!
 That stanza blows all thoughts of pity off,
 As empty straws are scattered by the wind!
 For I have been the victim of the Jews,
 Who, by vile barter, have absorbed my means. 90
 Did I not pawn—for that same flagrant stuff,
 Which only waits a spark to be dissolved,
 And, having done its mission, must disperse
 As a thin smoke into the ambient air—
 My diamond cross, my goblet, and my books?
 What! would they venture to baptize the Jew?
 The cause assumes a holier aspect, then;
 And, as a faithful son of Rome, I dare
 To merge my darling passion in the wrong
 That is projected against Christendom! 100
 Pity, avaunt! I may not longer stay.

*[Exit into the vaults. A short pause,
 after which he reappears.]*

'Tis done! I vanish like the lightning bolt.

ORGAN and CHOIR.

Nicholai sacerdotum
 Decus, honor, gloria:
 Plebem omnem, clerum totum—

[The Cathedral is blown up.]

SCENE VII

Saloon.—Pall and Coffin.

Enter COUNTESS, CONFESSOR, HAVERILLO, and
 ATTENDANTS.

CONFESSOR.

WEEP not, dear lady—he is now at rest!
 Nor thundering cannon, nor loud-booming drum,
 Nor braying trumpet, nor the clarion's call,
 Nor rapid crash of charging chivalry,
 Can stir him from his sleep. For him no more

Hath the lewd tinkling of the amorous lute
 Behind a twilight lattice, or the wave
 Of a light kerchief in a stealthy hand,
 Or lifting of dark eyelids, any charm!
 No more shall he, in joyous revelry,
 Ply the loose wine-cup, or exchange the jest—
 And therefore, I beseech you, dry your tears. 10

HAVERILLO. (*Aside.*)

Why, what a ghostly comforter is this!
 He tells her nothing of the yet to be,
 But only harps upon the aching past.

CONFESSOR.

Bear up that coffin! Grief hath had its scope,
 And now 'tis time to pause. Bethink thee, lady,
 How it may fare with thine Alphonzo's soul.
 There's no rich clothing in the world beyond,
 No jewell'd cups, no sparkling costly gems, 20
 No rare display of silver and of gold
 Such as your sideboards show on gala-days—
 But the poor spirit, shivering and alone,
 On the cold sea-beach of eternity.
 Must shriek for help to those he left behind.
 Say—shall Alphonzo plead to thee in vain?

COUNTESS.

O man—man—man! Thy prating drives me mad—
 Thy hideous voice is loathsome to mine ear,
 Albeit I know not what thou croakest there!
 Set down the coffin—set it down, I say! 30
 I have not yet wept half the flood of tears
 That I must pour on my Alphonzo's head.
 There's a hot deluge seething in my brain,
 And I must give it leave to flow, or die!

HAVERILLO.

Poor lady, she is greatly moved! 'Twere best
 To give her passion way. Bethink you, sir;
 A mother rarely will with patience hear
 A true reproach against a living son,
 Far less a taunt directed at the dead.

CONFESSOR.

Who's he that dares usurp my privilege,
 Or question my discretion? Is't for thee,
 Thou silken moth, to flutter round the torch
 Of conscience, flaming in a Churchman's hands,
 And try to smother it? What art thou, sirrah?
 I warrant me some kinsman, with an eye
 To those vast hoards of molten vanity, 40

Which can alone relieve Alphonzo's soul
Under the guidance of our holy Church.
Out on thee, heretic!

HAYERILLO.

Presumptuous priest!
Wert thou unfrocked, I'd tell thee that thou liest.

CONFESSOR.

Hence, vile disturber of the hapless dead!
Thou enemy of souls—thou sordid knave,
That, for a paltry pittance to thyself,
Wouldst bar the gates of Paradise to him
Who lies beneath yon pall! What, caitiff wretch!
Wilt thou again presume to answer me?
Let but a word escape thy tainted lips,
And the most fell anathema of Rome,
From which there neither is appeal nor cure,
Shall fulmine on thy head!

51

As for thee, lady—
If thou regardest him whom thou hast lost
With holier feeling than the tigress shows
When, in her savage and blood-boltered den,
She moans above the carcass of her cubs—
Consume no more the precious hours in grief;
Each hour is precious to a soul in pain!
Give me the keys of all thy coffered wealth,
That, with a liberal hand, I may dispense
Thy hoarded angels to the suffering poor.
Thy jewels also—what hast thou to do
With earthly jewels more?—give them to me;
And for each brilliant thou shalt hear a mass
Sung for Alphonzo. Fie on filthy pride!
Is't meet a widow's house should hold such store
Of flagons, cups, and costly chalices,
Of massive salvers and ancestral bowls?
These are the subtle spider-threads of sin
That bind the soul to earth. Away with them!
Thou hast no children now.

60

70

COUNTESS.

Thou crawling wretch—
Thou holy lie—thou gilded sepulchre—
Thou most consummate hypocrite and knave!
How darest thou take measure of my grief
With thine unnatural hands? What! thou a priest,
And, in the hour of desolation, seek'st
For ransom to be paid in gems and gold
For a pure spirit, which, beside thine own,
Would show as glorious as an angel's form

80

Contrasted with an Ethiopian slave!
 What are thy prayers, that I should purchase them?
 Hast thou not fed, for twenty years and more, 90
 Upon the liberal bounty of our house?
 Have I not seen thee flatter and deceive;
 Fawn like a spaniel; and, with readiest lie,
 Make coverture of thine obscene attempts
 Upon my handmaids? Villain! there they stand,
 The blushing proofs of thine impurity.
 Hast thou not stroked my lost Alphonzo's head
 A thousand times, protesting that no youth
 Gave ever promise of a fairer course?
 And wouldst thou now retract that word of thine,
 And, in the presence of my blighted flower, 101
 Deny the glorious perfume that it bore?
 O get thee gone! thou mak'st me wrong the dead,
 By wasting moments, consecrate to tears,
 In idle railing at a wretch like thee!

CONFESSOR.

This is mere madness! Think not to escape,
 By angry words and frantic declamation.
 The righteous claims of the defrauded Church.
 I stir not hence until her dues are paid.
 If thou withhold'st thy keys, I warn thee, lady, 110
 That holy Peter will not turn his key
 For any of thy race!

COUNTESS.

Thou cormorant
 That screamest still for garbage! take thy fill,
 And rid me of thy presence. Fabian—
 Show him the secret chamber of the Cid,
 Wherein the ransom of the Moors is piled:
 There is the key—and let him never more
 Pollute my threshold! O my lost Alphonzo!
 (Swoons.)

CONFESSOR.

Ho, ho! I have it now! The key, the key!
 Come quickly, Master Steward! 120
 [Exit. Scene closes.]

SCENE VIII

A Gallery.—At the end an armed figure bearing a mace.

Enter CONFESSOR and FABIAN.

CONFESSOR.

I WARRANT me thou thinkest, Master Steward,
 That I was over urgent with thy dame.

There are some natures, sir, so obstinate
That mildness will not stir them, and for these
The Church enjoins a wholesome stimulant.
Such is your lady.

FABIAN.

You are learned, sir,
And doubtless know your duty. Here's the chamber.

CONFESSOR.

What mean you, fellow? There is nothing here
Except an effigy in rusted mail.
Beware of trifling with the Holy Church!

10

FABIAN.

That is the guardian of the treasure-room.
I see you marvel—Listen. Long ago,
Pedro, the founder of this ancient house,
Was the dear friend and comrade of the Cid.
Often together in the battle-field
Did they two charge the squadrons of the Moor,
And mow the stalwart unbelievers down.
Seldom they spared a life—yet once, by chance,
The caliph of Baldracca crossed their path,
Him they took captive, with three princes more, 20
And made them stand to ransom. All the East,
As I have heard—Chaldea, Araby,
Fez, Tunis, India, and the far Cathay—
Was racked for tribute. From the Persian Gulf
There came huge bags of large and lustrous pearl,
Which in the miry bottom of the sea
The breathless diver found. Then there were opals
Bright as young moons, and diamonds like stars,
Far-blazing rubies, gorgeous carbuncles,
Jacinths and sapphires. And with these there came, 30
Ten camel-loads of curious workmanship,
All wrought in solid gold—a greater ransom
Than ever yet was tendered for a king!

31

CONFESSOR.

Thy words have oped a fountain in my mouth,
And stirred its waters! Excellent Fabian—
So half this wealth accrued to D'Aguilar?

FABIAN.

Of that, anon. When all the heap was piled
Before them, then the Campeador said:—
May not my sin lie heavy on my soul
Upon my dying day! For I have broke
A vow I made in youth before the shrine
Of San Iago, never in the field

40

To spare a heathen. What is done, is done—
 May be atoned for, but not blotted out.
 I will not touch the ransom. Be it given
 Entire to thee, my brother D'Aguilar!

CONFESSOR.

No wonder Spain still glories in the Cid!
 What! are the treasures here? Speak quickly, man!

FABIAN.

Your patience for a moment! When the knight
 Found no persuasion could affect the Cid. 50
 Or sway him from his purpose, then he yielded.
 One half the ransom bought the goodly lands
 Which still pertain unto the D'Aguilars.
 The other half lies in a secret room,
 The door of which I'll show you—you've the key.
 But first I'll tell you why yon effigy
 Stands there to guard it.

CONFESSOR.

What is that to me?
 What do I care about your effigies,
 Or mumbled stories of the knights of old?
 The door, I say!

FABIAN.

Yet listen—'Tis my duty 60
 To make this clear. When Ruy Diaz died,
 The knight of D'Aguilar obtained his arms;
 And in remembrance of the bounteous gift
 He placed them there before the treasure-room.
 'Tis said the mighty spirit of Bivar
 Still dwells within that corslet; and the mace,
 Which once was called the hammer of the Moor,
 Is swayed on high, and will descend on those
 Who come to wrong the race of D'Aguilar.
 I've heard my father tell, that, ere my birth, 70
 Two reckless villains of Gitano blood,
 Lured by the rumour of the treasured wealth,
 Tried, over-night, to force that secret door;
 And, in the morning, when the servants came,
 They found a brace of battered carcasses,
 The skulls beat into pulp, upon the floor;
 And yonder mace—how terrible it is!
 Was dropping with their blood!

CONFESSOR.

And dost thou think
 With thy false legends to deter me now,
 Thou paralytic slave? Reserve thy tales 80

For gaping crones, and idle serving-men!
 Can I not make an image stare and wink,
 Exhibit gesture with its painted hands,
 Yea, counterfeit the action of a saint—
 And dost thou hope to scare me with a lie?
 Where is the door, I say?

FABIAN.

Bear witness, Saints,
 That I am sackless of the consequence!
 You are forewarned—

CONFESSOR.

The door—the door, I say!

FABIAN.

Insert the key beneath that panel there!

CONFESSOR.

So—it is mine, all mine! Why, now am I 90
 A king of Ind, an emperor of the earth!
 No haste, no haste!—I would not lose the thrill
 Of expectation that entrances me
 For half the glorious heap that's stored within!
 Why, for a handful of those orient pearls
 I'll buy a bishopric. A dozen rubies
 May make me Metropolitan; and then,
 As gems are scarce and highly prized at Rome,
 A costly diamond for the noble front
 Of the Tiara, may advance my claim 100
 Unto the title of a Cardinal—
 Let me take breath—Lord Cardinal—a Prince
 And Magnate of the Church! What follows next?
 Brain, do not lose thyself in ecstasy,
 Nor swim to madness at the thought of that
 Which lies within my reach—Saint Peter's chair!
 Why, half the wealth within this hidden vault
 Would bribe the Holy College, and would make
 Me—me, the lord of monarchs, and the chief 110
 Of all the rulers over Christendom!
 Ha, ha! to see the mighty world lie down
 In homage at my feet, and hear its hail
 To me as lord and master!

Is't a dream?
 Oh, no, no, no! for here, within my hand,
 I hold the precious key that shall at once
 Admit me to the temple of my hope—
 Open, old wards, to him who shall be Pope!

[*He attempts to open the Door, and is struck down by the
 Mace of the Effigy.*]

FABIAN.

Right little moaning need I make for one
 Who died by his own sin! Poor prostrate fool.
 Whom warning would not reach! Six feet of earth
 Is all that even Popes can claim as theirs. 121
 Thy span must yet be less: no funeral bell
 May toll for thee—I'll drop thee in a well.
 [*Exit with the body.*]

SCENE IX

Summit of the Pillar of St Simcon Stylites.

FIRMILIAN.

'Twas a grand spectacle! The solid earth
 Seemed from its quaking entrails to erect
 The gathered lava of a thousand years,
 Like an imposthume bursting up from hell!
 In a red robe of flame, the riven towers,
 Pillars and altar, organ-loft and screen,
 With a singed swarm of mortals intermixed.
 Were whirled in anguish to the shuddering stars.
 And all creation trembled at the din.
 It was my doing—mine alone! and I 10
 Stand greater by this deed than the vain fool
 That thrust his torch beneath Diana's shrine.
 For what was it inspired Erostratus
 But a weak vanity to have his name
 Blaze out for arson in the catalogue?
 I have been wiser. No man knows the name
 Of me, the pyrotechnist who have given
 A new apotheosis to the saint
 With lightning blast, and stunning thunder-knell!
 And yet—and yet—what boots the sacrifice? 20
 I thought to take remorse unto my heart,
 As the young Spartan hid the savage fox
 Beneath the foldings of his boyish gown,
 And let it rive his flesh. Mine is not riven—
 My heart is yet unscarred. I've been too coarse
 And general in this business. Had there been
 Amongst that multitude a single man
 Who loved me, cherished me—to whom I owed
 Sweet reciprocity for holy alms,
 And gifts of gentle import—had there been 30
 Friend—father—brother, mingled in that crowd,
 And I had slain him—then indeed my soul
 Might have acquired fruition of its wish,
 And shrieked delirious at the taste of sin!
 But these—what were the victims unto me?

Nothing! Mere human atoms, breathing clods,
 Uninspired dullards, unpoetic slaves,
 The rag, and tag, and bobtail of mankind;
 Whom, having scorched to cinders, I no more
 Feel ruth for what I did, than if my hand
 Had thrust a stick of sulphur in the nest
 Of some poor hive of droning humble-bees,
 And smoked them into silence!

40

I must have
 A more potential draught of guilt than this,
 With more of wormwood in it!

Here I sit,
 Perched like a raven on old Simeon's shaft,
 With barely needful footing for my limbs—
 And one is climbing up the inward coil,
 Who was my friend and brother. We have gazed
 Together on the midnight map of heaven,
 And marked the gems in Cassiopeia's hair—
 Together have we heard the nightingale
 Waste the exuberant music of her throat,
 And lull the flustering breezes into calm—
 Together have we emulously sung
 Of Hyacinthus, Daphne, and the rest,
 Whose mortal weeds Apollo changed to flowers.
 Also from him I have derived much aid
 In golden ducats, which I fain would pay
 Back with extremest usury, were but
 Mine own convenience equal to my wish.
 Moreover, of his poems he hath sold
 Two full editions of a thousand each,
 While mine remain neglected on the shelves!
 Courage, Firmilian! for the hour has come
 When thou canst know atrocity indeed,
 By smiting him that was thy dearest friend.
 And think not that he dies a vulgar death—
 'Tis poetry demands the sacrifice!
 Yet not to him be that revealment made.
 He must not know with what a loving hand—
 With what fraternal charity of heart
 I do devote him to the infernal gods!
 I dare not spare him one particular pang,
 Nor make the struggle briefer! Hush—he comes.

50

60

70

HAVERILLO, *emerging from the staircase.*

How now, Firmilian!—I am scant of breath;
 These steps have pumped the ether from my lungs,
 And made the bead-drops cluster on my brow.
 A strange, unusual rendezvous is this—
 An old saint's pillar, which no human foot
 Hath scaled this hundred years!

80

FIRMILIAN.

Ay—it is strange!

HAVERILLO.

'Faith, sir, the bats considered it as such:
They seem to flourish in the column here,
And are not over courteous. Ha! I'm weary:
I shall sleep sound to-night.

FIRMILIAN.

You *shall* sleep sound!

HAVERILLO.

Either there is an echo in the place,
Or your voice is sepulchral.

FIRMILIAN.

Seems it so?

HAVERILLO.

Come, come, Firmilian—Be once more a man!
Leave off these childish tricks, and vapours bred
Out of a too much pampered fantasy. 90
What are we, after all, but mortal men,
Who eat, drink, sleep, need raiment and the like,
As well as any jolterhead alive?
Trust me, my friend, we cannot feed on dreams,
Or stay the hungry cravings of the maw
By mere poetic banquets.

FIRMILIAN.

Say you so?

Yet have I heard that by some alchemy
(To me unknown as yet) you have transmuted
Your verses to fine gold.

HAVERILLO.

And all that gold
Was lent to you, Firmilian.

FIRMILIAN.

You expect,
Doubtless, I will repay you? 100

HAVERILLO.

So I do.

You told me yesterday to meet you here,
And you would pay me back with interest.
Here is the note.

FIRMILIAN.

A moment.—Do you see
Yon melon-vender's stall down i' the square?

Methinks the fruit that, close beside the eye,
 Would show as largely as a giant's head,
 Is dwindled to a heap of gooseberries!
 If Justice held no bigger scales than those
 Yon pigmy seems to balance in his hands,
 Her utmost fiat scarce would weigh a drachm!
 How say you?

110

HAVERILLO.

Nothing—'tis a fearful height!
 My brain turns dizzy as I gaze below,
 And there's a strange sensation in my soles.

FIRMILIAN.

Ay—feel you that? Ixion felt the same
 Ere he was whirled from heaven!

HAVERILLO.

Firmilian!
 You carry this too far. Farewell. We'll meet
 When you're in better humour.

FIRMILIAN.

Tarry, sir!
 I have you here, and thus we shall not part.
 I know your meaning well. For that same dross,
 That paltry ore of Mammon's mean device
 Which I, to honour you, stooped to receive,
 You'd set the Alguazils on my heels!
 What! have I read your thought? Nay, never shrink,
 Nor edge towards the doorway! You're a scholar!
 How was't with Phaeton?

121

HAVERILLO.

Alas! he's mad.
 Hear me, Firmilian! Here is the receipt—
 Take it—I grudge it not! If ten times more,
 It were at your sweet service.

FIRMILIAN.

Would you do
 This kindness unto me?

HAVERILLO.

Most willingly.

130

FIRMILIAN.

Liar and slave! There's falsehood in thine eye!
 I read as clearly there, as in a book,
 That, if I did allow you to escape,
 In fifteen minutes you would seek the judge.
 Therefore, prepare thee, for thou needs must die!

HAVERILLO.

Madman—stand off!

FIRMILIAN.

There's but four feet of space
 To spare between us. I'm not hasty, I!
 Swans sing before their death, and it may be
 That dying poets feel that impulse too:
 Then, prythee, be canorous. You may sing 140
 One of those ditties which have won you gold,
 And my meek audience of the vapid strain
 Shall count with Phoebus as a full discharge
 For all your ducats. Will you not begin?

HAVERILLO.

Leave off this horrid jest, Firmilian!

FIRMILIAN.

Jest! 'Tis no jest! This pillar's very high—
 Shout, and no one can hear you from the square—
 Wilt sing, I say?

HAVERILLO.

Listen, Firmilian!

I have a third edition in the press.
 Whereof the proceeds shall be wholly thine— 150
 Spare me!

FIRMILIAN.

A third edition! Atropos—
 Forgive me that I tarried!

HAVERILLO.

Mercy!—Ah!—

[FIRMILIAN hurls him from the column.]

SCENE X

*Square below the Pillar.**Enter APOLLODORUS, a Critic.*

WHY do men call me a presumptuous cur,
 A vapouring blockhead, and a turgid fool,
 A common nuisance, and a charlatan?
 I've dashed into the sea of metaphor
 With as strong paddles as the sturdiest ship
 That churns Medusae into liquid light,
 And hashed at every object in my way.
 My ends are public. I have talked of men
 As my familiars, whom I never saw.

Nay—more to raise my credit—I have penned 10
 Epistles to the great ones of the land,
 When some attack might make them slightly sore,
 Assuring them, in faith, it was not I.
 What was their answer? Marry, shortly this:
 ‘Who, in the name of Zerneckock, are you?’
 I have reviewed myself incessantly—
 Yea, made a contract with a kindred soul
 For mutual interchange of puffery.
 Gods—how we blew each other! But, ’tis past—
 Those halcyon days are gone; and, I suspect, 20
 That, in some fit of loathing or disgust,
 As Samuel turned from Eli’s coarser son,
 Mine ancient playmate hath deserted me.
 And yet I am Apollodorus still!
 I search for genius, having it myself,
 With keen and earnest longings. I survive
 To disentangle, from the imping wings
 Of our young poets, their crustaceous slough.
 I watch them, as the watcher on the brook
 Sees the young salmon wrestling from its egg, 30
 And revels in its future bright career.
 Ha! what seraphic melody is this?

Enter SANCHE, a Costermonger, singing.

Down in the garden behind the wall,
 Merrily grows the bright-green leek;
 The old sow grunts as the acorns fall,
 The winds blow heavy, the little pigs squeak.
 One for the litter, and three for the teat—
 Hark to their music, Juanna my sweet!

APOLLODORUS.

Now, heaven be thanked! here is a genuine bard,
 A creature of high impulse, one unsoiled 40
 By coarse conventionalities of rule.
 He labours not to sing, for his bright thoughts
 Resolve themselves at once into a strain
 Without the aid of balanced artifice.
 All hail, great poet!

SANCHE.

Save you, my merry master! Need you any leeks or
 onions? Here’s the primest cauliflower, though I say
 it, in all Badajoz. Set it up at a distance of some ten
 yards, and I’ll forfeit my ass if it does not look bigger
 than the Alcayde’s wig. Or would these radishes suit
 your turn? There’s nothing like your radish for cooling
 the blood and purging distempered humours. 52

APOLLODORUS.

I do admire thy vegetables much.
 But will not buy them. Pray you, pardon me
 For one short word of friendly obloquy.
 Is't possible a being so endowed
 With music, song, and sun-aspiring thoughts,
 Can stoop to chaffer idly in the streets,
 And, for a huckster's miserable gain,
 Renounce the urgings of his destiny? 60
 Why, man, thine ass should be a Pegasus,
 A sun-reared charger snorting at the stars,
 And scattering all the Pleiads at his heels—
 Thy cart should be an orient-tinted car,
 Such as Aurora drives into the day,
 What time the rosy-fingered Hours awake—
 Thy reins—

SANCHE.

Lookye, master, I've dusted a better jacket than
 yours before now, so you had best keep a civil tongue
 in your head. Once for all, will you buy my radishes?

APOLLODORUS.

No!

SANCHE.

Then go to the devil and shake yourself! 71
 [Exit.

APOLLODORUS.

The foul fiend seize thee and thy cauliflowers!
 I was indeed a most egregious ass
 To take this lubber clodpole for a bard.
 And worship that dull fool. Pythian Apollo!
 Hear me—O hear! Towards the firmament
 I gaze with longing eyes; and, in the name
 Of millions thirsting for poetic draughts,
 I do beseech thee, send a poet down!
 Let him descend, e'en as a meteor falls, 80
 Rushing at noonday—

[He is crushed by the fall of the
 body of HAVERILLO.

SCENE XI

A Street.

Enter Two GENTLEMEN, meeting.

FIRST GENTLEMAN.

SAVE you, brave Cavalier!

SECOND GENTLEMAN.

The like to you, sir.
I scarce need ask where you have been to-day—
All Badajoz was at the market-place.

FIRST GENTLEMAN.

You mean the Act of Faith? I was too late:
Will you vouchsafe me some relation of it?

SECOND GENTLEMAN.

I've seen a larger muster for the stake:
But never was the public interest
Excited to so vehement a pitch.
Men did not care for Jews or heretics,
Though some of both descriptions were produced. 10
The leading victim was the Graduate,
Whose monstrous deed in blowing up the church,
Whereby a thousand lives and more were lost,
Stands yet unequalled for atrocity.
Faith, sir! the Inquisition had hard work
To guard him from his dungeon to the pile.
When he came forth, from twenty thousand throats
There rose so horrid and so fierce a yell
That I was fain to hold my tingling ears. 20
Mothers, whose sons had perished in the church,
Howled curses at him: old men shook their fists
With palsied vehemence; and there were some
Who carried naked daggers in their hands,
And would have hacked him piecemeal.

FIRST GENTLEMAN.

And no wonder—
'Twas a most horrid and unnatural deed;
My young remembrance cannot parallel
A fellow to it.

SECOND GENTLEMAN.

Yet was he quite calm:
A little pale, perhaps, but noway moved
By all their hooting. When he reached the pile,
He craved permission of the Inquisitor,
To say a word or two. That being granted, 30
He turned him straightway to the raging crowd,
Which, at his gesture, stilled itself awhile,
And spoke in parables.

FIRST GENTLEMAN.

How mean you, sir?
Did he confess his guilt?

SECOND GENTLEMAN.

In faith, not he !
 His speech was worse than any commination.
 He curs'd the city, and he curs'd the church ;
 He curs'd the houses, and he curs'd their stones.
 He cursed, in short, in such miraculous wise,
 That nothing was exempted from his ban. 40
 Then, sir, indeed the people's wrath was roused.
 And a whole storm of cats came tumbling in,
 Combined with baser missiles. I was fain,
 Not wishing to be wholly singular.
 To add my contribution to the rest.
 Yet he curs'd on, till the Familiars gagged him—
 Bound him unto the stake, and so he died.

FIRST GENTLEMAN.

You tell the story very pleasantly.
 Were there no more of note in the procession ?

SECOND GENTLEMAN.

There was a fellow, too, an Anabaptist, 50
 Or something of the sort, from the Low Countries,
 Rejoicing in the name of Teufelsdröckh.
 I do not know for what particular sin
 He stood condemned ; but it was noised abroad
 That, in all ways, he was a heretic.
 Six times the Inquisition held debate
 Upon his tenets, and vouchsafed him speech,
 Whereof he largely did avail himself.
 But they could coin no meaning from his words,
 Further than this, that he most earnestly 60
 Denounced all systems, human and divine.
 And so, because the weaker sort of men
 Are oft misled by babbling, as the bees
 Hive at the clash of cymbals, it was deemed
 A duty to remove him. He, too, spoke.
 But never in your life, sir, did you hear
 Such hideous jargon ! The distracting screech
 Of waggon-wheels ungreased was music to it ;
 And as for meaning—wiser heads than mine
 Could find no trace of it. 'Twas a tirade 70
 About fire-horses, jötuns, windbags, owls,
 Choctaws and horse-hair, shams and flunkeyism,
 Unwisdoms, Tithes, and Unveracities.
 Faith, when I heard him railing in crank terms.
 And dislocating language in his howl
 At Phantasm Captains, Hair-and-leather Popes.
 Terrestrial Law-words, Lords, and Law-bringers.—
 I almost wished the Graduate back again :
 His style of cursing had some flavour in't ;

The other's was most tedious. By and by,
 The crowd grew restive; and no wonder, sir;
 For the effect of his discourse was such,
 That one poor wench miscarried in affright.
 I did not tarry longer. 80

FIRST GENTLEMAN.

Your narration
 Makes me regret less heartily the chance
 That kept me from the show. Is there naught else
 Talked of in Badajoz?

SECOND GENTLEMAN.

Why, yes, sir—much,
 And of strange import: but the cautious lip
 Dares not, as yet, give utterance to its thought
 In the full measure. Death hath been amongst us, 90
 Not striking at the old, but at the young,
 In most unusual fashion. Three young men,
 All in strong health, untainted by disease,
 Died in a tavern. Marry, sir—'tis thought
 Their cups were spiced. But a few days ago,
 Our most aspiring poet, Haverillo,
 Fell from St Simeon's column—no one knows
 What took him to its top;—another life,
 I hear, was lost in his abrupt descent,
 But no one could identify the corpse. 100
 Then there's a Priest amissing—these are things
 Portentous in themselves, and very strange.
 Further, there's some slight scandal noised abroad
 About the niece of an Inquisitor—
 I name no names—who may have been, perchance,
 Somewhat too credulous. 'Tis a strange world!
 Are you acquainted with Firmilian?

FIRST GENTLEMAN.

But slightly, sir: I've held a bet or so
 With him upon the bull-fights. Why d'ye ask?

SECOND GENTLEMAN.

Because (in confidence), I think 'twere wise 110
 To close your book with him. I heard it said,
 Not many days ago, that his old uncle,
 The Dean of Salamanca, had expired,
 And left him all his wealth. Heaven bless you, sir—
 I have a turn for genealogy,
 And, by my reckoning, he is no more kin
 To the old Dean than to the Holy Pope!
 I may be wrong, you know—but in such matters
 'Tis prudent to be sure. There are reports,

On which I shall not dwell, which make me think 120
Firmilian is not safe. You understand me?

FIRST GENTLEMAN.

Your kindly hint hath found a ready way
To a most anxious bosom! Let us go
Towards the Prado. I've a little tale
To tell you of that same Firmilian. [Exeunt.]

SCENE XII

The Vaults of the Inquisition.

*The INQUISITORS are seated on benches.—Behind them
FAMILIARS bearing torches.*

*Throughout this Scene, distant peals of thunder
are heard.*

CHIEF INQUISITOR.

WOULD I could bid you welcome, brethren, here!
This wild derangement of the elements,
These fiery gashes in the vault of heaven
That stream with flame, and fright the astonished earth,
Are not from natural causes: Hell is loose;
The Prince o' the Air hath called his legions up,
And demons' wings are madly flashing by
On hideous errantry! There have been deeds
Wrought here among us of so vile a sort— 9
Such impious words have pierced the nether world—
That the fiends, starting from their sulphurous beds,
Have answered to the summons!

OLD INQUISITOR.

Such a night
There hath not been since that in Wittemberg,
When damned Faustus lost his wretched soul.

CHIEF INQUISITOR.

Yea, reverend brother, it was even so;
And, much I fear me, some in Badajoz
Have, by their practice of unholy arts,
Sinned worse than Faustus. Stand thou forth, Bal-
thazar;
And tell us what thou knowest.

FIRST FAMILIAR.

Most reverend sirs,
I, and my fellow, Gil of Santillane, 20
Both sworn Familiars of this Holy office,

Received of late commission to inquire
 Touching the trade of a suspected Jew.
 His dealing was in philtres, amorous drugs,
 Powders of mummy, amulets, and charms,
 All which we seized, and brought the caitiff here
 To be examined. When upon the rack,
 He, being urged by subtle questioning,
 Confessed that oftentimes he had procured
 Most strange material for a student's use—
 As skulls, thigh-bones, a murderer's wasted hand
 Hewn from the gibbet, and such other ware
 As sorcerers do employ. Besides these things,
 He owned that he had purchased from a Moor
 A curious work upon geometry,
 And sold it to Firmilian.

30

CHIEF INQUISITOR.

Can the stars
 Retain their place within the firmament,
 When wickedness like this is wrought below?
 Proceed, Balthazar.

FIRST FAMILIAR.

These particulars
 Being in their nature horrid and profane,
 Did Mordecai right cheerfully disclose.
 Yet we, remembering what the vulgate saith,
 Touching the doubtful witness of a Jew
 Against a Christian, did esteem it fit
 To make more perquisition. For that end,
 I, and my comrade, Gil of Santillane,
 Sought out Firmilian's servant. Him we found
 Within a wine-shop—

40

OLD INQUISITOR.

Mark that well, my masters!
 For threescore years and ten I've held my office,
 And never did I know the sorcerer yet
 Whose servant felt not a perpetual thirst.
 I pray you let that fact be noted down.

50

CHIEF INQUISITOR.

It shall be noted. Well—what followed next?

FIRST FAMILIAR.

Obedient to our orders, Gil and I,
 Albeit habitual shunners of the cup,
 Did somewhat deviate from our wonted rule.
 And made slight show of wassail. Whereupon,
 This Nicodemus, young Firmilian's knave,

Did gradually to us some part disclose
Of his employer's practice.

CHIEF INQUISITOR.

Did he so?

60

A servant's tale is damning evidence
Against his lord! What said this Nicodemus?
Stand down, Balthazar—Speak thou, Santillane.

SECOND FAMILIAR.

He told us this—that long ago, in Wales,
His master had from one Plotinus learned
Most wondrous secrets: that on Wednesday nights
He was attended by an ugly imp,
Whose outward apparition bore the stamp
Of an enormous hedge-hog.

OLD INQUISITOR.

I remember

The like was said of Paracelsus too,
And of Cornelius. I myself have seen
A hedge-pig suckled by a Moorish witch.
That must have been about the year sixteen,
Or two years later. Is it taken down?
For threescore years and ten I've held my office,
And never knew a necromancer yet
But dealt in hedge-hogs! Is it taken down?

70

CHIEF INQUISITOR.

It is, my reverend brother. Santillane—
On with your story.

SECOND FAMILIAR.

Warily he talked

Of magic circles, skulls, and fumigations—
Of the great Devil, and his sulphurous stench—
Of phantom beavers, and of bottle imps;
The bare recital of which monstrous things
Made each particular hair to stand on end,
Like quills upon the fretful porcupine.
I can depone no further.

80

OLD INQUISITOR.

Porcupines

Are worse than hedge-hogs!

CHIEF INQUISITOR.

Is this Nicodemus

Still safe within your reach?

FIRST FAMILIAR.

Right holy sir,
 He is. We deemed it wiser to defer
 His capture till we knew your reverend pleasure, 90
 In case Firmilian might take sudden wing.
 Moreover, I have something yet to tell,
 Which, if not touching sorcery, may lean
 To worse than heresy.

CHIEF INQUISITOR.

Thy care is great.
 Thou art our best Familiar; and I think,
 E'en as thou speak'st, and lettest out the truth,
 The frightened fiends desert the upper sky
 And calm their thunder down. Say out thy say.

FIRST FAMILIAR.

I pray your reverend worships to believe
 I act not as a spy. 'Tis not for me 100
 To mark the twinkling of a lady's fan,
 To lurk behind church pillars, or to note
 The course of fervid glances. Such things lie
 Beyond my office; and I know full well
 That they are oftentimes assumed to hide
 Most faithful service to our Holy Church;
 And, therefore, I repeat, I am no spy.

CHIEF INQUISITOR.

I have still found thee—as the Church hath done—
 Discreet within thy function. Didst thou know
 Aught that might appertain to one of us, 110
 Or to the honour of our nearest kin,
 I do believe that thou wouldst rather dare
 Expose thyself upon the stretching rack
 Than speak out openly.

SEVERAL INQUISITORS.

We do believe it!

FIRST FAMILIAR.

Therein you understand me thoroughly.
 I am the poor Familiar of this House,
 And for the movements of such holy sirs,
 And of their households, have no eyes at all,
 Save at their pleasure. But Firmilian's case
 Demands a full divulgement.

OLD INQUISITOR.

Very right!
 I gather from this talk there's something wrong 120
 About Firmilian's morals. I have been
 For threescore years and ten Inquisitor,

And always have observed that heretics
Are faulty in their morals. Tell us all.

FIRST FAMILIAR.

Three weeks ago—'twas but a week before
The death of the three students—there appeared
Within a lonely cottage in the wood,
Hard bordering on the skirts of Badajoz,
An Indian maiden. She was dark as night, 130
And yet not unalluring, as I heard
From Santillane, my comrade—

SECOND FAMILIAR.

Holy sirs,
I swear such language ne'er escaped my lips!
I only said that in a heathen's eye
She might find favour.

OLD INQUISITOR.

Doubtless so she would.
I do remember, fifty years ago.
A very comely damsel of that kind,
Purveyed, I think, from inner Africa—
I never saw a more voluptuous shape.
But to your story—

FIRST FAMILIAR.

Every day since then 140
Hath young Firmilian stolen to her bower
With utmost secrecy. What passeth there
I know not. But men say she sings by night
Mysterious ditties in an unknown tongue,
Of such unnatural and thrilling sort,
That the scared nightingales desert their boughs,
And evil birds of omen flit around
To list the Indian's music.

CHIEF INQUISITOR.

Is it so?
That shall be also looked to heedfully.
The fiend hath many snares, and it may be 150
That, in the likeness of a dusky quean,
He sends an agent hither. What I know
Of this Firmilian makes me fear the worst:
Yet it were wise to wait. I'll set a trap
Shall lure him to his ruin. Go we hence;
And in the inner casket of our hearts
Be all our secrets locked. Put out the lights!

[The torches are extinguished.]

SCENE XIII

*Among the Mountains.**Enter FIRMILIAN.*

WHY should I strive to comprehend the charm
 Of savage nature, or to fill my mind
 With thoughts of desolation, meanly filched
 From those rude rocks, and chasms, and cataracts?
 Why, none but fools affect to seek them now
 For the mere sense of grandeur. To a painter,
 Yon crag might seem magnificent indeed,
 With its bold outline. A geologist
 Would but regard it as a pillar left
 To mark some age that was pre-Adamite,
 And, with his hammer, excavate the bones
 Of brutes that revelled in the oozy slime,
 Ere yet a bud had burst in Eden's bower.
 Here is a terrace on the mountain side,
 As stately as the ever-watched approach
 Unto the palace of the greatest king.
 Your man of science cares not for its sweep,
 Nor aught around that might attract the eye;—
 He calls it a sea-margin, and exhumes
 The withered fragment of a cockle-shell,
 In proof of his averment, with more pride
 Than if he stumbled on a costly gem.
 O, there is room for infinite debate
 In a stray boulder; and the jagged streak
 Upon the surface of a harmless stone,
 May be the Helen to some future host
 Of glacier-theorists!

10

20

Such men are wise.
 They overlook the outward face of things;
 Seek no sensation from the rude design
 Of outward beauty; but fulfil their task
 Like moles, who loathe the gust of upper air,
 And burrow underneath!

30

Three days have I
 Been wandering in this desert wilderness
 In search of inspiration. Horrid thoughts,
 Phantasms, chimæras, tortures, inward spasms,
 Disordered spawn of dreams, distracting visions,
 Air-shrieks and haunting terrors were my aim—
 Yet nothing comes to fright me! How is this?
 Grant that my former efforts were in vain;
 At least the death of yon poor Haverillo
 Might be a millstone tied around my neck.
 And sink me to despair! It is not so.

40

I rather feel triumphant in the deed,
 And draw fresh courage from the thought of it.
 Were all my creditors disposed like him,
 Methinks the sunshine would be warmer still!
 Hold—Let me reckon closely with myself!
 Could my weak hand put back the clock of time
 To the same point whereon its index lay
 When first the thought of murder crossed my soul—
 Could I undo, even by a single word, 51
 All my past actings, and recall to life
 The three companions of my earlier years—
 The nameless crowd that perished in the church—
 The guileless poetaster—and the rest
 Who indirectly owe their deaths to me—
 Would I exert the power? Most surely not.
 Above the pool that lies before my foot
 A thousand gnats are hovering—an hour hence
 They'll drop into the mud! Should I lament 60
 That things so sportive, and so full of glee,
 So soon must pass away? In faith, not I!
 They all will perish ere the sun goes down,
 And yet to-morrow night that self-same pool
 Will swarm with thousands more. What's done, is done;
 I'll look on it no further.

But my work—
 That grand conception of my intellect,
 Whereby I thought to take the world by storm—
 That firstling of my soul—my tragedy—
 What shall become of it?

Alas! I fear 70
 I have mista'en my bent! What's Cain to me,
 Or I to Cain? I cannot realise
 His wild sensations—it were madness, then,
 For me to persevere. Some other bard
 With weaker nerves and fainter heart than mine
 Must gird him to the task. 'Tis not for me
 To shrine that page of history in song,
 And utter such tremendous cadences,
 That the mere babe who hears them at the breast,
 Sans comprehension, or the power of thought, 80
 Shall be an idiot to its dying hour!
 I deemed my verse would make pale Hecate's orb
 Grow wan and dark; and into ashes change
 The radiant star-dust of the milky-way.
 I deemed that pestilence, disease, and death,
 Would follow every strophe—for the power
 Of a true poet, prophet as he is,
 Should rack creation!

Get thee gone, my dream—
 My long-sustaining friend of many days!

Henceforth my brain shall be divorced from thee, 90
 Nor keep more memory of the wanton past
 Than one who makes a harem of his mind,
 And dallies with his thoughts like concubines!

Yet something must be done. 'Twere vile for me
 To sink into inaction, or remain
 Like a great harp wherein the music lies
 Unwakened by the hand. What if I chose
 A theme of magic? That might take the ear;
 For men who scarce have eyesight to discern
 What daily passes underneath their nose, 100
 Still peer about for the invisible.

'Twere easy now to weave a subtle tale
 Of ghosts and goblins, mermaids, succubi,
 Mooncalves and monsters—of enchanted halls,
 Wide-waving tapestry, haunted corridors—
 Of churchyards shadowed by mysterious yews,
 Wherein white women walk and wring their hands—
 Of awful caverns underneath the sea,
 Lit by the glimmer of a demon's eyes—
 Of skeletons in armour, phantom knights 110
 Who ride in fairy rings—and so revive
 The faded memories of our childish years
 With richer colour. Bah!—the time is past
 When such-like tales found audience. Children now
 Are greatly wiser than their fathers were,
 And prattle science in the nursery.

Raw-head-and-bloody-bones no longer scares
 The inmate of the cradle into rest;
 And that tremendous spectre of the North,
 The chimney-haunting Boo-man, comes no more,
 With hideous answer, to the nurse's call. 121
 Yet something do I know of magic too,
 And might have further sounded in its deep,
 But for the terror that o'ermastered me
 In my first essay. Scarcely had I read
 Ten lines of incantation, when a light,
 Like that of glow-worms pastured upon graves,
 Glared from the sockets of a fleshless skull,
 And antic shapes ran howling round the ring,
 And scared me to distraction. With the fiend 130
 I'll have no further traffic; for I dread
 Both him, and that which is opposed to him,
 The ruthless Inquisition. I'll no more
 Of magic or its spells!

What other theme
 Lies ready to my hand? what impulse stirs
 My being to its depths, and conjures up
 (As the young nymphs from sacred fountains rose)
 The best and fairest shapes of poetry?

Why—love, love, love!—the master of the world—
 The blind impetuous boy, whose tiny dart 140
 Is surer than the Parthian javelin—
 Love, whose strong hest all living things obey—
 Love, the lord-paramount and prince of all
 The heroes of the whirling universe!
 Was it not love that vanquished Hercules,
 What time he writhed in Dejanira's gown?
 Was it not love that set old Troy on flame,
 Withdrew Achilles from the Grecian camp,
 And kept Ulysses bound in Circe's bower?
 Was it not love that held great Samson firm 150
 Whilst coy Delilah sheared his lusty locks.
 And gave him powerless to the Philistine?
 Was it not love that made Mark Antony
 Yield up his kingdoms for one fervid kiss
 From Egypt's ripest Queen? What better theme
 Could be proposed than this? A graduate I.
 And an expert one too, in Cupid's lore—
 What hinders me to raise a richer song
 Than ever yet was heard in praise of love?
 Let the cold moralists say what they will, 160
 I'll set their practice boldly 'gainst my verse,
 And so convict them of hypocrisy.
 What text-books read their children at the schools?
 Derive they Latin from a hymnal source,
 Or from the works of rigid anchorites?
 Not so! That hog of Epicurus' sty,
 The sensuous Horace, ushers them along
 To rancid Ovid. He prepares the way
 For loose Catullus, whose voluptuous strain
 Is soon dismissed for coarser Juvenal. 170
 Take we the other language—Is there much
 Of moral fervour or devout respect
 That can be gleaned from old Anacreon's lays,
 Or Sappho's burning starts? What pious lore
 Can the alembic of the sage extract
 From the rank filth of Aristophanes?
 Is Lucian holy reading? And, if not,
 Why, in the name of the old garden-god,
 Persist they in their system? Pure indeed
 Must be the minds of those compelled to wade 180
 Through all the dunghills of antiquity.
 If they escape without some lasting stain.
 What do our moralists? To make things clear
 Which otherwise might 'scape the youthful sense,
 They write Pantheons—wherein you may read,
 In most exact and undisguised detail,
 The loves of Jove with all his relatives,
 Besides some less conspicuous amours

With Danaë, Europa, and the like.
 What merrier jests can move the schoolboy's spleen,
 Than the rich tale of Vulcan and of Mars; 191
 Or of Apollo, when, in hot pursuit
 Of Daphne, 'stead of tresses in his hand,
 He found a garland of the laurel leaves?
 Well-thumbed, be sure, the precious pages are
 That tell of Venus and of Mercury!
 And shall the men, who do not shrink to teach
 Such saving doctrine to their tender sons,
 Accuse me if I shrine the same in verse,
 And with most sweet seductive harmony, 200
 Proclaim the reign of Love o'er all the world?
 Henceforward then, avaunt, ye direful thoughts
 That have oppressed the caverns of my brain!
 I am discharged from guilt, and free from blood
 Which was but shed through misconceived desire!
 How glorious is the lightness of the soul
 That gleams within me now! I am like one
 Who, after hours of horrid darkness passed
 Within the umbrage of a thunder-cloud,
 Beholds once more the liquid light of day 210
 Streaming above him, when the splendid sun
 Calls up the vapours to his own domain,
 And the great heap moves slowly down the vale,
 Muttering, in anger, for its victim lost!
 Now could I roll, as gaily as a child,
 On the fresh carpet of the unsown flowers—
 Now could I raise my voice in innocent glee,
 And shout from cataract unto cataract—
 But that a single thought disturbs me yet;
 My vow to Mariana—Will she bear 220
 That frank communion which I must achieve
 Ere yet my song is perfect? She is proud,
 And somewhat overbearing in her walk,
 Yet there's no woman past the power to tame.
 A Count of Stolberg once,—a wedded man,
 Whose restless disposition drove him on
 To wear the cross, and fight in Palestine—
 Was taken captive by an Emir there,
 And 'scaped from prison solely by the aid
 Of the one daughter of his enemy. 230
 'Tis said that, when he brought the damsel home,
 The Christian matron no remonstrance made,
 But took her, like a sister, to her heart,
 And the blest three lived on in unison.
 Why should I not revive the earlier days?
 Why should the stately Mariana look
 More coldly upon Lilian, or that flower
 That I have gathered from the Afric plains,

Than Rachel on her handmaid? I can quote
 Sufficient texts to still her first harangue, 240
 If she be angry. Will she so endure?
 Kind Cupid, aid! In this, I must be sure!
 [Exit.

SCENE XIV

A Garden.—FIRMILIAN. MARIANA.

FIRMILIAN.

My Mariana!

MARIANA.

O my beautiful!
 My seraph love—my panther of the wild—
 My moon-eyed leopard—my voluptuous lord!
 O, I am sunk within a sea of bliss,
 And find no soundings!

FIRMILIAN.

Shall I answer back?
 As the great Earth lies silent all the night,
 And looks with hungry longing on the stars.
 Whilst its huge heart beats on its granite ribs
 With measured pulsings of delirious joy—
 So look I, Mariana, on thine eyes! 10

MARIANA.

Ah, dearest, wherefore are we fashioned thus?
 I cannot always hang around thy neck
 And plant vermilion kisses on thy brow;
 I cannot clasp thee, as yon ivy bush—
 Too happy ivy!—holds, from year to year,
 The stalwart oak within her firm embrace,
 Mixing her tresses fondly up with his,
 Like some young Jewish maid with Absalom's.
 Nay, hold, Firmilian! do not pluck that rose!

FIRMILIAN.

Why not? it is a fair one.

MARIANA.

Are fair things 20
 Made only to be plucked? O fie on thee!
 I did not think my lord a libertine!

FIRMILIAN.

Yet, sweetest, with your leave I'll take the rose,
 For there's a moral in it.—Look you here.
 'Tis fair, and sweet, and in its clustered leaves
 It carries balmy dew: a precious flower,

And vermeil-tinctured, as are Hebe's lips.
 Yet say, my Mariana, could you bear
 To gaze for ever only upon this,
 And fling the rest of Flora's casket by?

30

MARIANA.

No, truly—I would bind it up with more,
 And make a fitting posy for my breast.
 If I were stinted in my general choice,
 I'd crop the lily, tender, fresh, and white,—
 The shrinking pretty lily—and would give
 Its modest contrast to the gaudier rose.
 What next? some flower that does not love the day—
 The dark, full-scented night-stock well might serve
 To join the other two.

FIRMILIAN.

A sweet selection!
 Think'st thou they'd bloom together on one breast
 With a united fragrance?

MARIANA.

Wherefore not?
 It is by union that all things are sweet.

41

FIRMILIAN.

Thou speakest well! I joy, my Mariana.
 To find thy spirit overleaps the pale
 Of this mean world's injurious narrowness!
 Never did Socrates proclaim a truth
 More beautiful than welled from out thy lips—
 'It is by union that all things are sweet.'
 Thou, darling, art my rose—my dewy rose—
 The which I'll proudly wear, but not alone.
 Dost comprehend me?

50

MARIANA.

Ha! Firmilian—
 How my eyes dazzle!

FIRMILIAN.

Let me show you now
 The lily I have ta'en to bind with thee.

[*He brings LILLIAN from the Summer-house.*]

MARIANA.

Is this a jest, Firmilian?

FIRMILIAN.

Could I jest
 With aught so fair and delicate as this?

Nay, come—no coyness ! Both of you embrace.
Then to my heart of hearts—

MARIANA.

Soft you a moment !
Methinks the posy is not yet complete.
Say, for the sake of argument, I share
My rights with this pale beauty—(for she's pretty ; 60
Although so fragile and so slight a thing,
That a mere puff of April wind would mar her)—
Where is the night-stock ?

FIRMILIAN *brings* INDIANA *from the tool-house.*

Here !

MARIANA.

A filthy negress !

Abominable !

LILIAN.

Mercy on me ! what blubber lips she has !

MARIANA, *furiously* to FIRMILIAN.

You nasty thing ! Is this your poetry—
Your high soul-scheming and philosophy ?
I hate and loathe you ! (*To Indiana.*)—Rival of my
shoe,
Go, get thee gone, and hide thee from the day
That loathes thine ebon skin ! Firmilian— 70
You'll hear of this ! My brother serves the king.

LILIAN.

My uncle is the chief Inquisitor,
And he shall know of this ere curfew tolls !
What ! Shall I share a husband with a coal ?

MARIANA.

Right, girl ! I love thee even for that word—
The Inquisition makes most rapid work,
And, in its books, that caitiff's name is down !

FIRMILIAN.

Listen one moment ! When I was a babe,
And in my cradle puling for my nurse,
There fell a gleam of glory on the floor, 80
And in it, darkly standing, was a form—

MARIANA.

A negress, probably ! Farewell awhile—
When next we meet—the faggot and the pile !
Come, Lilian ! *[Exeunt.]*

INDIANA.

I shake from head to foot with sore affright—
What will become of me?

FIRMILIAN.

Who cares? Good night!
[Scene closes.]

SCENE XV

A Barren Moor.—Night—Mist and fog.

Enter FIRMILIAN.

THEY'RE hot upon my traces! Through the mist
I hear their call and answer—and but now,
As I was crouching 'neath a hawthorn bush,
A dark Familiar swiftly glided by,
His keen eyes glittering with the lust of death.
If I am ta'en, the faggot and the pile
Await me! Horror! Rather would I dare,
Like rash Empedocles, the Etna gulf,
Than writhe before the slaves of bigotry.
Where am I? If my mind deceives me not, 10
Upon that common where, two years ago,
An old blind beggar came and craved an alms,
Thereby destroying a stupendous thought
Just bursting in my mind—a glorious bud
Of poesy, but blasted ere its bloom!
I bade the old fool take the leftward path,
Which leads to the deep quarry, where he fell—
At least I deem so, for I heard a splash—
But I was gazing on the gibbous moon,
And durst not lower my celestial flight 20
To care for such an insect-worm as he!
How cold it is! The mist comes thicker on.
Ha!—what is that? I see around me lights
Dancing and flitting, yet they do not seem
Like torches either—and there's music too!
I'll pause and listen.

Chorus of IGNES FATUL.

Follow, follow, follow!
Over hill and over hollow;
It is ours to lead the way,
When a sinner's footsteps stray— 30
Cheering him with light and song,
On his doubtful path along.
Hark, hark! The watch-dogs bark.
There's a crash, and a splash, and a blind man's cry,
But the Poet looks tranquilly up at the sky!

FIRMILIAN.

Is it the echo of an inward voice,
Or spirit-words that make my flesh to creep,
And send the cold blood choking to my heart?
I'll shift my ground a little—

Chorus of IGNEs FATU.

Flicker, flicker, flicker! 40
Quicker still, and quicker.
Four young men sate down to dine,
And still they passed the rosy wine;
Pure was the cask, but in the flask
There lay a certain deadly powder—
Ha! his heart is beating louder!
Ere the day had passed away,
Garcia Perez lifeless lay!
Hark! his mother wails Alphonzo,
Never more shall strong Alonzo 50
Drink the wine of Ildefonso.

FIRMILIAN.

O horror! horror! 'twas by me they died:
I'll move yet farther on—

Chorus of IGNEs FATU.

In the vaults under
Bursts the red thunder;
Up goes the cathedral,
Priest, people, and bedral!
Ho! ho! ho! ho!

FIRMILIAN.

My brain is whirling like a potter's wheel!
O Nemesis! 60

Chorus of IGNEs FATU.

The Muses sing in their charmed ring,
And Apollo weeps for him who sleeps,
Alas! on a hard and a stony pillow—
Haverillo! Haverillo!

FIRMILIAN.

I shall go mad!

Chorus of IGNEs FATU.

Give him some respite—give him some praise—
One good deed he has done in his days;
Chaunt it, and sing it, and tell it in chorus—
He has flattened the cockscorn of Apollodorus!

FIRMILIAN.

Small comfort that! The death of a shard-beetle, 70
 Albeit the poorest and the paltriest thing
 That crawls round refuse, cannot weigh a grain
 Against the ponderous avalanche of guilt
 That hangs above me! O me miserable!
 I'll grope my way yet further.

Chorus of IGNES FATUI.

Firmilian! Firmilian!

What have you done to Lilian?

There's a cry from the grotto, a sob by the stream,
 A woman's loud wailing, a little babe's scream!

How fared it with Lilian,

80

In the pavilion,

Firmilian, Firmilian!

FIRMILIAN.

Horror! I'm lost!—

Chorus of IGNES FATUI.

Ho! ho! ho!

Deep in the snow

Lies a black maiden from Africa's shore!

Hasten, and shake her—

You never shall wake her—

She'll roam through the glens of the Atlas no more!

Stay, stay, stay!

90

This way—this way—

There's a pit before, and a pit behind,

And the seeing man walks in the path of the blind!

[FIRMILIAN falls into the quarry. The IGNES
 FATUI dance as the curtain descends.]

MISCELLANEOUS POEMS

PRINTED IN SIR THEODORE MARTIN'S *Memoir*
of *Aytoun*, 1867.

THE BALLAD OF LYCAON

FROM OVID.

[From 'Bon Gaultier and his Friends', *Tait's Edinburgh Magazine*, June 1844.]

OUR spoke, then, Jove to the gods above,
 As they sate in their skiey hall,
 'The deed is done, and the forfeit won,
 Then list, my children all.
 While I speak the crimes of those fearful times,
 Too black to be forgiven,
 And the cry of wrath that rose from earth,
 And drew us down from Heaven!
 'In form and face like the human race,
 We hush'd our thunders still, 10
 And glided down from the hoary crown
 Of the high Olympian hill.
 The world we made so fresh and fair
 Was now like a desert grown,
 For the stain of blood was everywhere,
 And the altars were overthrown.
 'We took our way, at the dawn of day,
 Over Maenalus dark and grim,
 And we heard the howl of the beasts that prowled 20
 In Cyllene's forests dim.
 We wander'd through Lycoeus, too,
 Swart with its pine trees' shade,
 And we reach'd the floor of the tyrant's door
 As the daylight 'gan to fade.
 'Then made we sign of our might divine,
 And the people straight kneel'd down,
 But Lycaon chafed at his subjects' faith,
 And check'd them with his frown.
 "The truth we'll test of this holy guest,"
 The tyrant thus began, 30
 "And if his powers be more than ours,
 Let the god eclipse the man!"

24 daylight 'gan] day began 1867

'He thought to creep, when all men sleep,
 Armed with a trenchant blade,
 And pierce the heart of the stranger wight,
 In his own pavilion laid.
 But first to try if a heavenly eye
 Could fathom his foul design,
 He stained his hand in a mortal's blood,
 Ere he bathed it red in mine.

40

'A herald lay in his house that day,
 A nation's pledge to him,
 But the caitiff slew him as he slept,
 And hewed him limb from limb!
 With care he dressed that odious feast,
 Then with a horrid sneer
 He bade us come to the banquet room
 And taste his royal cheer.

'In wrath and ire I made the fire
 Through the vaulted dwelling roar,
 And hurled the foul Penates down
 On their master's tainted floor.
 In fear and dismay he fled away
 To the forest solitudes,
 And howled alone, like a guilty ghost,
 In the wild Arcadian woods.

50

'For days and days he wander'd there,
 A wretch by heaven accurst,
 The viscous foam from his black lips flew,
 And his soul was mad with thirst.
 He cried for blood, he raved for blood,
 Till a fearful change began,
 And he turned to rend the peaceful flocks.
 And lost the shape of man.

60

'His shoulders bare were clothed with hair,
 His limbs grew long and lean,
 Yet still you might trace on his wolfish face
 What once the wretch had been.
 The grisly locks were hard and stiff,
 The eye was cold and keen,
 And the savage sneer of Lycaon's mouth
 In the famished wolf was seen!'

70

THE WANDERING JEW

[*Memoir*, 1867]

THE wizzard sat within his hall—
 A dark and tapestried room—

49 wrath and] my righteous 1867

59 viscous] vicious 1867

Where but one taper's flaring light
Strove feebly with the gloom;
While drearily, without, the wind
Sang as around a tomb.

He read some old and mystic book
Within that lonely hall;
And as the figured arras waved
With noiseless swell and fall,
You might have thought the spirits came
Unto their master's call.

10

No sound there was (save the drear blast
That swooned with dismal moan)
To break the ringing silence made
So solemn and so lone;
There is not of all earthly sounds
One with so deep a tone.

It was a chamber vast and bare,
For awe and terror meet;
For nothing broke its emptiness
Save that one stony seat.
And where a mighty mirror hung
Its black and velvet sheet.

20

The wizard read, and still the light
Shone with a sickly glare;
That—hark! a slow and solemn step
Is creaking on the stair.
He turns him to the door, and, lo!
A stranger standeth there.

30

High was his mien—he stood, and gave
Nor sign, nor word, nor bow;
A palmer's mantle wrapped him round,
Like knight on saintly vow;
And 'neath his raven locks he wore
A bandage o'er his brow.

The wizard first the silence broke:
'What wouldst thou have with me?
Art thou a knight of good St. John
From isles across the sea?
Or com'st thou from the Holy Land,
Or distant Galilee?'

40

'Oh! I have wandered far and wide,
By forest, stream, and glade;
O'er trackless seas, o'er icy zones,
O'er sands without a shade;
O'er worlds where never foot of man
Hath one dark impress made.

'The earth is all the home I have,
The heavens my wide roof-tree;
And I have roamed through many a land, 50
And crossed full many a sea:
And, wizard, I have crossed them all
To speak one word with thee.'

'Speak out thy wish, and if my art
Can work that will of thine,
The masters of the elements
Shall bow before my sign.'
'Nay, wizard—nay; nor earth nor sea
May aid that wish of mine. 60

'Is't not within thy magic power
The mouldering dead to raise,
And bid a shape that's long since fled
Appear before my gaze?—
Then summon from the sepulchre
A form of bygone days.'

The wizard turned him hastily:
'By heaven! before that rite
The spirit of the north might quail,
And close his shuddering sight; 70
And couldst *thou* see nor feel thy heart
Throb, and thy cheek grow white?

'Behold! within this magic glass
A shadow shall be cast;
At every wave my wand shall call
Ten seasons from the past,
Until the phantom form appear
As thou didst see it last.'

The lamp went out, but from the glass
A phosphic gleam arose, 80
And flickered, with a death-like haze,
As life and warmth were froze—
Faint, dim, as looks a cottage light
Afur through drifting snows.

It threw a wan and pallid light
On face and arm and hand:
On floor and wall, in long relief,
It made the shadows stand—
The stranger in his palmer's garb,
The wizard with his wand. 90

He waved it once, and o'er the glass
Dark masses 'gan to fly;
He waved it twice, and scudding clouds
Went swiftly hurrying by;

He waved it thrice, and then closed in
The ocean of the sky.

And at each wave dark clouds rushed up
As from a fount below,
And joined the dense and deepening mass
That wavered to and fro, 100
As sways the ripe and yellow corn
When autumn breezes blow.

And still he waved, and still the mists
Rolled round the magic space;
Hath his wand lost its power, that still
The cloud is in its place?
The wizard started, and the blood
Shot o'er his time-worn face.

'Stranger, since first I waved my wand
Two hundred years have flown, 110
And yet from off the mirror's face
That shadow hath not gone.
Thou hast not trifled with mine art,
Or made——' 'Wave on! wave on!'

Oh! startling was that stifled voice,
So pent beyond a sigh—
It was the language of a soul
Parched up with agony!
The wizard dared not question him,
And yet he knew not why. 120

And still he waved, until his arm
Grew weary, faint, and slack.
Ages returned from out their graves,
As on a beaten track,
Till twice six hundred years had come
From dark oblivion back.

Then on that magic mirror's face
The masses lighter grew,
And faded dimly one by one.
As flies the morning dew, 130
Until the glorious sun shone out
Within a heaven of blue.

It shone upon a gorgeous scene
In fairy Eastern land:
To the horizon's utmost line
There stretched a sea of sand;
No spot of green save one was there,
But waste on every hand.

But in the foreground was a spot—
The desert's emerald gem— 140

Where green grass sprung and flower-shrubs laced
The fresh acacia's stem;
And o'er the whole the palm-tree throw
Its feathery diadem.

Beneath its roots a little brook
Gushed from its parent well,
To which a loaded camel stooped,
And rung its silver bell—
Throughout the still and air-worn room
That sound was audible.

150

And 'neath the shade a damsel sat,
In alien garb and vest;
And though they might not see the face
That leant upon her breast,
Yet, by her dark and glossy hair,
They well might guess the rest.

The strange man gazed upon her form
Like one who drinks his fill
Of love and freedom, which have been
A long-forgotten rill,
When their whole draughts of ecstasy
Are opened to his will.

160

Then died his thousand woes and pains,
His thousand cares and fears,
And forth from out their fountains gushed
A flow of blessed tears,
That with their holy influence cleansed
The misery of years.

And every prayer and every hope
That buried long had lain,
Came thirstily from out their springs
To bless his heart again,
That paid them back with bud and bloom,
As sands thank summer rain.

170

He gazed until that female form
Raised up her head and smiled;
Then shook his spirit as a reed,
As, with an accent wild,
He staggered on, stretched out his arms,
And shrieked, 'My child! my child!'

180

These words dissolved the spell; the scene
Died like a taper's light;
For o'er it shot the clouds again
In curtains broad and white,
Then disappeared, and left the glass
All natural and bright.

Moveless and fixed the stranger stood,
 Still as a marble stone;
 His eye had fallen into a trance,
 As if his heart had gone.
 He turned him, as to pass away,
 But word he uttered none.

100

The wizard stopped him with his hand,
 'Man of the darksome brow,
 Thy hair is like the raven's wing
 That playeth with the snow—
 How could she be thy child who died
 A thousand years ago?

'There is, as holy legends tell,
 But one who knows not death;
 He who reviled the Crucified
 With most accursed breath.
 And wounded with his soldier's spear
 The Man of Nazareth.

100

'Oh, fearful thought! the very grave
 Is closed 'gainst his endeavour,
 And tempered is his chain of life
 Too hard for aught to sever.
 He hath no hope, no happiness,
 For ever and for ever.

210

'A second Cain! he hath a mark,
 That every one may know;
 There is a cross of livid fire
 Imprinted on his brow.
 But *thou* hast no such seal as that—
 Dark stranger, who art thou?'

The stranger turned, he raised his hand,
 And back the bandage drew
 From off his brow: one glance, *but* one,
 The startled wizard threw,
 And the blood fell back upon his heart—
 It was the *Wandering Jew*.

220

THE ELDER'S WARNING

A LAY OF THE CONVOCATION.

[*Memoir*, 1867]

'Noo, John Makgill, my elder, come listen to my word,
 It's time to leave the harrows, it's time to draw the sword;
 The sheep may wander on the hill, the stots rout in the
 byre—

But another path is ours, John, through danger and
 through fire.

The cloud o' tribulation that we hae lang foreseen
Has gathered ower the land, John, like mists that rise at
e'en ;

The palings o' oor vineyard are gey near broken doun,
An' the bits o' vines are trampled by greedy laird and
loun.

The auld Erastian lords have put their feet upon oor
necks.

And oor chalders they have dwindled to little mair than
pecks ;

Thae weary interlocutors come pelting every day,
And the bills and the expenses are mair than we can pay.
But what is waur nor a', John, while thus distressed we
stand.

Black Prelacy is crawling like pushion through the land—
The scarlet woman will be here to sit within oor ha',
For when ye see a Bishop, John, the Paip's no far awa'.
They'll soon be here to tithe ye—they'll tithe both stot
and stirk ;

O ! waes me for the Covenant, and waes me for the Kirk !
They're ettling for the manses, John—they're ettling fast
and fain ;

And they'll be bringing Tam Dalyell and Claverse back
again.

But we'll meet them on the ground, John, whaur we
met them ance afore,

And pay thae weary Moderates a black and bitter score.
Sae lang's we're a' united, it winna do to bow
To the cankered Lords o' Session, and their wigs o'
plastered tow.

We'll gather on the hills, John—we'll gather far and
near—

And Candlish he will lead the van, and Cunningham the
rear ;

We'll think o' Bothwell Brig, John, and the Raid o'
Rullion Green ;

We'll show them that we lo'e the Kirk far better nor the
Queen.

Our Zion is in danger, sae tak' your auld claymore ;
And tak' ye down the rauchan that hangs ahint the
door,

And put your braid blue bannet on, an' we'll daunder up
the glen,

And meet the bauld Conventicle, as our fathers did, ye
ken.'

Auld John Makgill he listened, and whiles he wat his
thumb,
And whiles took up the cuttie-pipe that lay beside the
lum,

And whiles he keekit in the pat that held the simmering
kail;
But ne'er a bit he lifted his rauchan frae the nail.

'Nae doot, nae doot! an awfu' case! the times are
unco hard,
And sae your thinking, minister, to leave your ain kail-
yard,
And the bonny manse and stipend, that was worth twa
hundred pund—
And the Netherhaugh glebe-acres—its grand potato-
grund! 40
An awfu' dispensation! I canna say ye're wrang.
For gin ye think ye shu'dna stop, ye're very right to
gang.

And sae the Lords have beat the Kirk? that's wae fu'
news to tell;
Ye'se hae my blessing, minister, but I canna gae mysel'.
My auld claymore's just useless, it's rusted fu' o' holes—
Indeed, the bairns have broke it wi' hacking at the
coals.

The rheumatiz is in my back—I canna tell how sair—
An' I got my death wi' driving the beasts to Hallow
Fair.

I'm no the body that I was—ye ken I'm getting auld;
And as for lying out o' doors, the nights are dismal
cauld! 50

Ye'll need a gude thick greatecoat 'gin ye're ganging
up to sleep

In the bare and broken heather, 'mang the moorcocks
and the sheep.

Ye'll find its warmer lying, gif ye lie down heads and
thraws,

Wi' the ither noble gentlemen that winna thole the
laws.

I'm verra laith to lose ye, and so is Jenny here—

There's no a better liket man in ony parish near;

But gin the case is pressing, I wadna dare to say.

Ye'd better take a thought on't, and bide anither day.

'Twill be an unco comfort, when the nights are cauld
and mirk, 59

To think that ye are chosen to suffer for the Kirk.

For me it's clean impossible—ye ken I'm auld and frail;

But surely, sir, afore ye gang, ye'll stop and taste our
kail.

Now, glad should be our minister that he called at
John Makgill's,
For cozily he kept the manse, and never took the hills.

THE SCOTTISH CHRISTMAS

[From 'Bon Gaultier and his Friends', *Tait's Edinburgh Magazine*, February 1844]

In truth it was a solemn show,
The ancient Scottish Christmas tide:
The holly and the mistletoe.
With other boughs as green beside,
Within the altar and the rail;
The offering of the stainless flowers,
And all the grateful heart's avail,
For hope and promise such as ours.

But these have long since pass'd away
Beneath the cold Geneva ban; 10
No message brings that sacred day
Of what was done and wrought for man.
A cheerless day!—A gloomy time!
Whereon no grateful thanks are given;
Unhallow'd by the holy chime
That ought to rise and welcome heaven.

A frost more deep than winter brings,
Hath fallen on the Northern moor,
And no glad voice the Christmas brings
To stay the labours of the poor. 20
No anthem, in the dead of night,
Awakes the shepherd from afar,
Nor can he see the radiant light
That flashes from the promised Star.

Alone upon the wint'ry hill,
The banish'd Angel sits and sighs,
Yet scans the weary midnight still
With eager looks and tearful eyes.
The winds around are wailing low;
They moan amidst the leafless tree; 30
And in the hollow cave below
Is heard the washing of the sea.

The morning comes!—O, joy to those
Who know the wherefore of the dawn;
Why yonder East so brightly glows,
And why the veil of Night's withdrawn!
Old man, thy cheek is wan and pale;
The load of years is hard on thee;
Look up above!—'Of what avail
Is any morning light to me?' 40

4 With] And 1867 17 deep . . . winter brings,] chill
 . . . winter's sting 1867 18 fallen on] fall'n upon 1867
 19 the . . . brings] does . . . bring 1867

Around the girdle of the earth,
 Where'er the Cross hath ta'en its stand,
 Arise the tidings of the Birth
 That made the world one Holy Land!
 Save where the faith is cold and faint
 As are the Northern rocks and snow,
 Where sacred fane and honour'd saint
 Have vanish'd with the long ago!

ON MISS HELEN FAUCIT'S JULIET

[From 'Bon Gaultier and his Friends'. *Tail's Edinburgh Magazine*, February 1844]

I HAVE been wandering in enchanted ground,
 The slave and subject, Lady, of thy spell;
 I heard thy voice, and straightway all around
 Became transformed; yet how, I could not tell:
 And through Verona's streets I took my way.
 Thronged with quaint masks and gallants many a one.
 I heard the sounds of revel and of fray,
 And saw bright weapons flashing in the sun.
 So passed I on, in marvel, till the night
 Cooled the red furnace of the southern sky, 10
 And the sweet stars, all kindling into light,
 Burst through the vaulted darkness, where they lie.
 Hush'd was the city, and its varied din,
 As with a tremulous thrill, and half afraid,
 I entered, through a stately portal, in
 To what might be a garden or a glade.
 A soft voluptuous odour filled the spot,
 From the rose thickets and the orange bower,
 And a tall fountain, bursting from its grot,
 Broke up the moonbeam in a pearly shower; 20
 And then it was I heard the nightingale.
 Within the dark pomegranate boughs unseen,
 Pour out the saddest and the tenderest wail,
 That ever filled with tears a lover's eyne;
 When lo! a whisper stole upon my ear,
 With such angelic sweetness in its tone,
 That my heart beat as though a Saint were near,
 And lost all sense of presence—save of one.
 For there, upon the balcony above,
 And whiter than the moonlight round her shining,
 I saw the perfect form of maiden's love 31
 In the rapt fondness of her soul reclining;—

7 I heard] Amidst 1867
 granate-bower 1867

22 pomegranate boughs] pome-
 25 lo: a] a low 1867

And heard her speak in such impassioned strain,
 With so melodious yearning and divine—
 That I shall never hear that tale again
 From other lips, sweet Lady, than from thine. 36

NUPTIAL ODE ON THE MARRIAGE OF HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS THE PRINCE OF WALES

[1863.]

I

Pass from the earth, deep shadows of the night,
 Give place and vantage to the rosy dawn;
 For now the sullen Winter takes his flight,
 His dreary robes withdrawn:
 Coy as a maiden moves the wavering Spring
 With dainty step across the emerald lawn,
 Her tresses fair with primrose garland plight.
 Hark! how the woods and bursting thickets ring
 With the glad notes of love and welcoming;
 The twitter of delight, the restless call 10
 Of myriad birds that hold their festival
 When leaves begin to sprout and flowers to blow.
 'O joyous time!' 'tis thus I hear them sing,
 Each to its mate upon the burgeoning spray,—
 'O happy time! Winter hath pass'd away,
 Cold, rugged Winter, with its storms and snow,
 And all the sadness of the shorten'd year.
 Be glad—be glad! the pleasant days are near,
 The days of mirth, and love, and joy supreme,
 The long-expected days for which we pined! 20
 Flow on, for ever flow, thou wandering stream,
 Through tangled brakes, and thickets fast entwined
 With the lithe woodbine, and the clambering rose!
 For thee there is no rest;
 But we shall build our nest
 In some dim coppice where the violet blows;
 And thou shalt sing to us the livelong night,
 When hush'd, and still, and folded in delight,
 We pass from waking rapture to repose!'

II

So,—while hoar Winter stumbles from the field, 30
 Like some old tyrant, baffled and aghast,
 Who, palsy-stricken, yet most loath to yield,
 Points with malignant finger to the past—

Lay we the sombre weeds of mourning by,
 And hail the advent of the genial sun,
 No longer overcast
 By woeful clouds that with their curtain dun,
 And evil-omen'd pall,
 Made dark the year of our calamity.
 O ruthless year! sad and unblessed to all; 40
 Most fraught with anguish to the heart of One,
 Who evermore shall mourn,
 Reft of her lord, her lover, and her stay!
 In awe and silence veil that sacred urn,
 Quit the dim vault, and pass into the day!
 Not ours with impious plaint to censure doom,
 Or murmur, when we rather need to pray.
 'God call'd His servant home—His will be done!'
 What more can mortals say?
 Enough of tears are shed; 50
 Unmeasured wailing desecrates the dead,
 And vain repining but profanes the tomb!

III

Yet let the Muse with trembling fingers try
 To frame a verse for him so early lost.
 Good deeds immortal are—they cannot die;
 Unscathed by envious blight or withering frost
 They live, and bud, and bloom; and men partake
 Still of their freshness, and are strong thereby.
 He who, inspired by charity and love,
 Such deeds hath wrought, and for the Saviour's sake,
 Hath endless glory in the realms above. 61
 His place is now with that exalted host
 Who, born to greatness, wasted not their power
 In selfish luxury or idle boast,
 But trod the path of wise humility.
 Therefore assured already is his fame;
 Therefore nor pyramid nor stately tower
 Can add more honour to our ALBERT's name.
 High were his thoughts, and holy was his aim
 To raise and bless the people of the land: 70
 By peaceful arts to consecrate the toil
 Of those who, labouring on our English soil,
 Obey in patience God's supreme command,
 With that allegiance which becomes the free.
 Then rest, embalm'd for ever, noble heart,
 By all our loves; for sainted though thou art,
 Our fond remembrance still reverts to thee!

IV

Oh, Royal Lady! honour'd and most dear,
 Whose bitter woe no human tongue can tell,—

For whom, while bending o'er that piteous bier, 80
 From eyes unused to weep, the tear-drops fell!
 For whom a nation's prayer went up to heaven—
 For whom it yet arises night and day—
 Deem not our sorrow cold nor insincere
 For the high welcome given
 On this auspicious morning to thy son,
 Our hope, our darling Prince, our joy, our pride,
 And to the blooming bride,
 The fair young stranger he has woo'd and won.

V

Rejoice, brave England, through thy fertile plains, 90
 Thy stately cities and ancestral halls,
 Thy humbler homes where peace with plenty reigns,
 Thy shores that, firmer far than massiest walls,
 Defy the foeman and engird the free!
 Old land of worship, loyalty, and fame,
 Let every voice unite in glad acclaim
 To swell the chorus of our jubilee!
 Awake the echoes that have slumber'd long,
 Or answer'd faintly to another hail; 99
 Awake them with the shout that, loud and strong,
 Rang out from cliff to cliff when, sheath'd in mail,
 Victorious EDWARD trod the English shore,
 Fresh from the wars in France, with nobler spoil
 Than ever conquering captain home did bring.
 Then myriad voices rose in glad turmoil—
 'THE PRINCE! THE PRINCE!' they cried; and ever more
 Swell'd up the shout like ocean's gathering roar,
 And burst in deluge of delirious joy;
 The while, with modest grace, the hero-boy
 Bare-headed rode beside the captive King! 110

VI

But happier days have dawn'd upon us now:
 No longer rings the clangour of the fight;
 No more the balefire on the mountain brow
 Sends up its ruddy signal to the night;
 No huge Armadas vex the narrow seas,
 No angry navies thunder on the tide;
 But friendly ensigns flutter in the breeze,
 And barks unchallenged o'er the waters glide.
 We hail'd our Prince, returning not from war
 With blood-stain'd trophies wrench'd from hostile
 hand; 120
 His badge of triumph was the peaceful palm,
 Fresh gather'd from the Eastern emblem tree;
 For he hath journey'd to the Holy Land,
 And wander'd o'er its blessed hills of balm;

Hath bent before the Saviour's tomb the knee,
 Drank of the Jordan's stream, and seen afar,
 In stillest night, when all was hush'd and calm,
 'Neath Syrian skies, the lustrous evening star
 Shine in the dark expanse of Galilee.

VII

Welcome wert thou, young pilgrim, to thy home, 130
 But higher welcome England gives to-day;
 For now the long-expected hour has come;
 And, in its bright array,
 Moves to the altar-steps the bridal train.
 O happy, happy they—
 That fond and loving pair!
 The princely bridegroom and his peerless bride,
 So beautiful and fair.
 He, England's royal son and stateliest heir,
 She, daughter of the far-descended Dane. 140
 And now the knot is tied—
 The marriage-vows are ta'en;
 No longer are they twain,
 And nought but death shall ever them divide!

VIII

Blest be the hour! Proclaim it to the hills.
 Let the loud cannon thunder forth our glee;
 O'er mountains, rivers, plains, and rocks, and rills,
 Speed the glad signal, speed it fast and free!
 Behold! it leaps along with lightning glance.
 Peal after peal in verberating roar, 150
 From Dover rolling to the coast of France,
 From Mona's isle to Erin's answering shore.
 As starting swift from some oblivious trance,
 Each fortress thunders, and each cliff replies;
 Each lesser height prolongs the loud refrain.
 Wide through the land the joyful message flies;
 From where the hoary heap of Tintagell,
 Great Arthur's hold, frowns o'er the western main,
 To that huge buttress of the northern seas
 Smote by the Pentland's swell. 160
 Whence, dimly seen through tempest and through rain,
 Loom far away the stormy Orcades.

IX

Not silent wilt thou bide, impetuous Wales!
 Old hero-land, whose name, so proudly borne
 By that young Prince, rings o'er the world to-day.
 Still glows the ancient fire within thy dales,

Still lives the magic of Llewellyn's lay;
 Then, on this gracious morn,
 Let the wild rapture of the harp be heard;
 And bid the Cymric bard
 His highest notes essay;
 For never surely did a happier theme
 Melt into music in a minstrel's dream.

170

X

Loud as the rush of waters when the snow
 Has left the summit of the mountains bare.
 And the freed cataracts in thunder throw
 The weight of winter through the quaking air,
 Down to the gulfs that yawn and boil beneath—
 So Scotland lifts her voice,
 And with unabated breath
 Bids all her sons rejoice.
 Hearty and true the answer—Joy to thee,
 Heir of the Bruce, great joy! Our feast is spread:
 Yet ah, we lack the ornament and head
 That should have crown'd the measure of our glee!
 Take then our greeting; but the day will come
 When we, with transport of tumultuous pride,
 Shall welcome fondly to their northern home
 Our princely chieftain and his blooming bride.
 O quickly, quickly glide
 On wings of love till then, celestial hours!
 Swift be your flight; and when the summer spreads
 Her carpet on the meads,
 Strewn with the garniture of odorous flowers;
 When glows with purple every mountain-side,
 And the still lakes receive
 In the vast mirror of their waters wide
 The blush and glory of the crimson eve—
 A louder, wilder cheer
 Shall burst upon the ear,
 And shouts of triumph herald to the sky,
 The long exulting cry—
 'Be joyful, ancient land, for Scotland's Prince is here!

180

190

200

XI

Come, Erin, come, and join the sister band!
 Make the strong union of our loves complete;
 Perfect as THEIRS, who, clasping hand to hand,
 With guileless lips the sacred vows repeat;
 And by that pledge so excellent and sweet
 Bind kindred nations closer yet to stand.
 Ring out the bells! Let every face be gay
 To welcome this our royal holiday;

210

Be there no dull or lumpish laggarts here,
 To vex our honest cheer;
 But cast all care and dolorous thoughts away!
 Begin the nuptial song;
 The joyous strain prolong!
 We'll drink, whate'er betide,
 To bridegroom and to bride—
 Fill high the cup, and let the health go round!
 Then shout for joy amain— 220
 Shout, till the rafters overhead resound,
 For such a day as this ye shall not see again!

XII

O happy times, when iron-visaged war
 Like a maim'd giant in his dungeon lies,
 No more to urge along his creaking car
 'Midst women's shrieks, and children's frightened cries!
 O happy days, where peace and love combine
 To rule the nations with benignant sway;
 When prosperous planets ever nightly shine,
 And hope awakens with the dawn of day! 230
 Not such was England in the times of yore.
 Back roll the years, as roll the clouds away—
 And lo, the vision of a shelving shore!
 Black ships are tossing on the surfy bay—
 Thick on the strand the uncouth warriors swarm,
 Stalwart and fierce, in terrible array—
 See! in their van the grim Berserkars bear
 The Raven banner flapping in the air—
 They climb the cliffs! Arm, men of England, arm!
 Rush to the fight, be resolute and bold! 240
 No wandering pirates muster on the plain,
 No puny foemen threat the Saxon hold—
 Strike for your lives and homes! It is the conquering
 Dane!

XIII

Sons of the valiant dead!
 Whose fathers Hengist led
 What time the scatter'd Britons fled afar—
 Vain is your boasted might;
 Ye cannot win the fight,
 Nor stem the torrent of that furious war.
 The Danish sword hath cleft the Saxon shield, 250
 And rank with slaughter is the trampled fen.
 Few take to flight, and fewer yet will yield,
 But none will strike for England's cause again.
 Night settles down, and lo, the sky is red,
 Gleaming from east to west with smothering fires;
 The convents kindle, and the lofty spires

Of churches blaze; above the cloister'd dead
Crash down the roofs, and many a fane expires!

XIV

Then desolation lords it o'er the land;
Fell rapine stalks abroad; and who shall keep 260
The timorous flock, or brutal rage withstand,
When prowl the hungry wolves around the sheep?
Where is the shepherd—ALFRED, where is he?
Where hides the king in this disastrous hour?
Behold yon hut in lonely Athelney,
The haunt and refuge of the baited boor!
There lurks the Saxon monarch with the poor,
In servile weeds, crouch'd by a squalid hearth;
Yet not forgetful of his royal birth,
And taught by stern misfortune to endure. 270
Again the trumpet sounds—the Saxons throng;
The Cross, dishonour'd late, is rear'd on high;
And thousands, madden'd by their country's wrong,
Swear the deep oath, to conquer or to die.
Ravens of Denmark! Does that boding cry
Predict a triumph or a foul defeat?
Dark sweep the clouds across an angry sky;
Dashes the rain, and pelts the blinding sleet;
The thunder bellows, and the lightning glares,
But aye the bickering blade 280
Cleaves the strong helm, and through the corslet shares.
The Danesman's march is stay'd—
Stay'd! Call ye that a stay? The staggering host,
Like their own ships by screaming tempest tost,
Waver and break—Make in! the day's our own!
Again night settles on the fated field—
The Saxon sword is red,
Hewn is the Danish shield.
The Cross triumphant waves above his head,
And English ALFRED hath his kingdom won! 290

XV

Depart, ye shadows of the olden time!
Faint as the forms in weird Agrippa's glass,
Evoked from Hades by enchanted rhyme,
Like vapour melting into air, they pass.
No dark fantastic vision of the night
Now casts its glamour o'er the gazer's eye.
Fair as a poet's dream, serenely bright,
Veiled in the charm of maiden modesty,
The Rose of Denmark comes, the royal Bride!
O loveliest Rose! our paragon and pride, 300
Choice of the Prince whom England holds so dear—

What homage shall we pay
 To one who has no peer?
 What can the bard or wilder'd minstrel say
 More than the peasant, who, on bended knee,
 Breathes from his heart an earnest prayer for thee?
 Words are not fair, if that they would express
 Is fairer still; so lovers in dismay
 Stand all abash'd before that loveliness
 They worship most, but find no words to pray. 310
 Too sweet for incense! Take our loves instead,
 Most freely, truly, and devoutly given;
 Our prayers for blessings on that gentle head,
 For earthly happiness and rest in Heaven!
 May never sorrow dim those dovelike eyes,
 But peace as pure as reigned in Paradise,
 Calm and untainted on creation's eve,
 Attend thee still! May holy angels keep
 Watch o'er thy path, and guard thee in thy sleep!
 Long years of joy and mutual love be thine, 320
 And all that mortals ask or can receive
 Of benediction from the Hand Divine!

XVI

Most happy Prince! who such a priceless gem
 Hast set within thy royal diadem;
 Heir of illustrious kings, what words can tell
 The joy that fills the nation's heart this day!
 If the fond wish of those who love thee well
 Could call down blessings; as the bounteous May
 Shows blossom on the turf—as ocean spray
 Flies glittering o'er the rocks—as summer rain 330
 Falls sweetly soft on some sequestered dell,
 Bidding the languid herb revive again—
 Then never surely Prince were blest like thee!
 For in thy gentle nature well we see
 The manhood, worth, and valour of thy sires,
 Temper'd with such a winsome nobleness
 (The glow without the rage of bickering fires).
 That shame it were and sin to love thee less.
 And though no human hand can lift the veil
 Of the dark future, or unfold the page 340
 Of that most awful book, wherein the tale,
 To be accomplish'd, of the coming age
 Stands in eternal characters of doom—
 Though no prophetic voices from the tomb,
 Or mystic oracles of dim presage,
 Can tell us what shall be—our trust is high,
 Yea, in the Highest! HE will be thy shield,
 Thy strength, thy stay, though all the world combine.

Believing that, we fear no enemy :
No foreign war, nor treason unreveal'd, 350
Can shake thy house, or mar thy royal line :
Dread none, great Prince ; our hearts and loves are
thine !

XVII

Cease then, my strain ! too weak, perchance, and rude,
To be the descant on a theme so sweet ;
A sorry tribute, though the will be good,
This day of highest festival to greet,
When Youth and Beauty at the altar meet,
And all the land is ringing with acclaim.
Unequal as thou art and incomplete,
What haughty tongue shall censure thee or blame, 360
Since lowliest gifts with richest offerings vie ?
Cease and be done ! For lo, the western sky
Is purpling down to darkness, and the glare
Of myriad lamps is flashing in the air,
And on the distant hills the bonfires blaze.
Swift stars rush upwards with a fiery train,
Dispersed in clusters of effulgent rays,
And meteors bursting into golden rain.
So gleams the startled firmament : but soon
Supreme in heaven shall glide the tranquil moon, 370
All meaner fires eclipsed. On plain and hill
She sheds her peaceful light—
Hushed be each irksome noise ; let all be still ;
And holiest silence seal the marriage night !

POEMS AND BALLADS OF GOETHE

[1859; second edition, 1860]

AND OTHER TRANSLATIONS.

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POEMS AND BALLADS OF GOETHE

WARNING

[*Blackwood's Magazine*, February 1845]

Do not touch him—do not wake him! Fast asleep is
 Amor lying;
 Go—fulfil thy work appointed—do thy labour of the
 day.
 Thus the wise and careful mother uses every moment
 flying,
 Whilst her child is in the cradle—Slumbers pass
 too soon away.

THE BROTHERS

[*Blackwood's Magazine*, February 1845]

SLUMBER, Sleep—they were two brothers, servants to
 the Gods above;
 Kind Prometheus lured them downwards, ever fill'd
 with earthly love;
 But what Gods could bear so lightly, press'd too hard
 on men beneath;
 Slumber did his brother's duty—Sleep was deepen'd
 into Death.

LOVE'S HOUR-GLASS

[*Blackwood's Magazine*, February 1845]

EROS! wherefore do I see thee, with the glass in either
 hand?
 Fickle God! with double measure wouldst thou count
 the shifting sand?
 'This one flows for parted lovers—slowly drops each
 tiny bead—
 That is for the days of dalliance, and it melts with
 golden speed.'

THE WREATHS

[*Blackwood's Magazine*, February 1845]

OUR German Klopstock, if he had his will,
 Would bar us from the skirts of Pindus old.
 No more the classic laurel should be prized,
 But the rough leaflets of our native oak
 Alone should glisten in the poet's hair;
 Yet did himself, with spirit unreclaim'd
 From first allegiance to those early Gods,
 Lead up to Golgotha's most awful height
 With more than epic pomp the new Crusade.
 But let him range the bright angelic host 10
 On either hill—no matter. By his grave
 All gentle hearts should bow them down and weep.
 For where a hero and a saint have died,
 Or where a poet sang prophetic,
 Dying as greatly as they greatly lived,
 To give memorial to all after times,
 Of lofty worth and courage undismay'd;
 There, in mute reverence, all devoutly kneel,
 In homage of the thorn and laurel wreath,
 That were at once their glory and their pang! 20

SACRED GROUND

[*Blackwood's Magazine*, February 1845]

A PLACE to mark the Graces, when they come
 Down from Olympus, still and secretly,
 To join the Oreads in their festival,
 Beneath the light of the benignant moon.
 There lies the poet, watching them unseen,
 The whilst they chant the sweetest songs of heaven,
 Or, floating o'er the sward without a sound,
 Lead on the mystic wonder of the dance.
 All that is great in heaven, or fair on earth,
 Unveils its glories to the dreamer's eye, 10
 And all he tells the Muses. They again,
 Knowing that Gods are jealous of their own,
 Teach him, through all the passion of his verse,
 To utter these high secrets reverently.

MARRIAGE UNEQUAL

[*Blackwood's Magazine*, February 1845]

ALAS, that even in a heavenly marriage,
 The fairest lots should ne'er be reconcil'd!
 Psyche wax'd old, and prudent in her carriage,
 Whilst Cupid evermore remains the child.

EXCULPATION

[*Blackwood's Magazine*, February 1845]

WILT thou dare to blame the woman for her seeming
 sudden changes,
 Swaying east and swaying westward, as the breezes
 shake the tree?
 Fool! thy selfish thought misguides thee—find the *man*
 that never ranges;
 Woman wavers but to seek him—Is not then the
 fault in thee?

HOLY FAMILY

[*Blackwood's Magazine*, February 1845]

O CHILD of beauty rare—
 O mother chaste and fair—
 How happy seem they both, so far beyond compare!
 She, in her infant blest,
 And he in conscious rest,
 Nestling within the soft warm cradle of her breast!
 What joy that sight might bear
 To him who sees them there,
 If, with a pure and guilt-untroubled eye,
 He look'd upon the twain, like Joseph standing by.

THE TREASURE-SEEKER

[*Blackwood's Magazine*, October 1844]

I

MANY weary days I suffer'd.
 Sick of heart and poor of purse;
 Riches are the greatest blessing—
 Poverty the deepest curse!
 Till at last to dig a treasure
 Forth I went into the wood—
 'Fiend! my soul is thine for ever!'
 And I sign'd the scroll with blood.

II

Then I drew the magic circles,
 Kindled the mysterious fire,
 Placed the herbs and bones in order,
 Spoke the incantation dire.
 And I sought the buried metal
 With a spell of mickle might—
 Sought it as my master taught me;
 Black and stormy was the night.

III

And I saw a light appearing
 In the distance, like a star;
 When the midnight hour was tolling,
 Came it waxing from afar: 20
 Came it flashing, swift and sudden,
 As if fiery wine it were,
 Flowing from an open chalice,
 Which a beauteous boy did bear.

IV

And he wore a lustrous chaplet,
 And his eyes were full of thought,
 As he stepp'd into the circle
 With the radiance that he brought.
 And he bade me taste the goblet;
 And I thought—'It cannot be, 30
 That this boy should be the bearer
 Of the Demon's gifts to me!'

V

'Taste the draught of pure existence
 Sparkling in this golden urn,
 And no more with baleful magic
 Shalt thou hitherward return.
 Do not seek for treasures longer;
 Let thy future spellwords be,
 Days of labour, nights of resting:
 So shall peace return to thee! 40

THE SEVEN SLEEPERS OF EPHEBUS

Six young men of Cæsar's household
 Fled before their master's anger;
 As a god he claim'd their worship,
 Though a sorry god was he.
 For an insect, ever buzzing,
 Still annoy'd him at the banquet,
 Still disturb'd his rest and pleasure.
 All the chasing of his servants
 Could not drive away the torment.
 Ever round the head of Cæsar 10
 Did the angry creature hover,
 Threatening with its poison'd sting:
 Still it flew, and swiftly circling
 Made confusion at the table,
 Messenger of Baalzebub,
 The infernal Lord of flies.

‘Ha!’—so spake the youths together—

‘He a God that fears an insect!

Can a God be thus molested?

Does a God, like wretched mortals, 20

Feast and revel at the banquet?

Nay! to Him, the one, the only,

Who the sun and moon created,

Who hath made the stars in glory,

Shall we henceforth bend the knee!’

So they spake, and left the palace,

Left it in their trim apparel;

By a shepherd led, they hasten’d

To a cave was in the mountain,

And they all went gliding in. 30

And the shepherd’s dog came after,

Though they strove to drive him from them;

Thrust himself toward his master,

Licked their hands in dumb entreaty,

That he might remain their fellow;

And lay down with them to sleep.

But the wrath of Cæsar kindled,
When he knew that they had left him;

All his former love departed,

All his thought was vengeance only. 40

Out in quest he sent his people,

Traced them to the mountain-hollow.

Not to fire nor sword he doom’d them;

But he bade great stones be lifted

To the entrance of the cavern;

Saw it fasten’d up with mortar;

And so left them in their tomb.

But the youths lay calmly sleeping;

And the angel, their protector,

Spake before the throne of glory: 50

‘I have watch’d beside the sleepers,

Made them turn in slumber ever,

That the damps of yonder cavern

Should not cramp their youthful limbs;

And the rocks around I’ve open’d,

That the sun at rising, setting,

May give freshness to their cheeks.

So they lie in rest and quiet,

In the bliss of happy dreams.’

So they lay; and still, beside them, 60

Lay the dog in peaceful slumber,

Never whimpering in his sleep.

Years came on, and years departed;
 Till at last the young men waken'd;
 And the wall, so strongly fasten'd,
 Now had fallen into ruin,
 Crumbled by the touch of ages.
 Then Iamblichus, the youngest,
 And the goodliest of them all,
 Seeing that the shepherd trembled,
 Said, 'I pray you now, my brothers,
 Let me go to seek provision;
 I have gold, my life I'll venture,
 Tarry till I bring you bread.'
 Ephesus, that noble city,
 Then, for many a year, had yielded
 To the faith of the Redeemer,
 Jesus. (Glory to his name!)

70

And he ran unto the city;
 At the gate were many warders,
 Arm'd men on tower and turret,
 But he pass'd them all unchallenged;
 To the nearest baker's went he,
 And in haste demanded bread.

80

'Ha! young rogue,' exclaimed the baker,
 'Surely thou hast found a treasure;
 That old piece of gold betrays thee!
 Give me, or I shall denounce thee,
 Half the treasure thou hast found.'

And Iamblichus denied it;
 But the baker would not listen,
 Brawling till the watch came forward.
 To the king they both were taken;
 And the monarch, like the baker,
 But a higher right asserting,
 Claim'd to share the treasure too.

90

But at last the wondrous story,
 Which the young man told the monarch,
 Proved itself by many tokens.
 Lord was he of that same palace,
 Whither he was brought for judgment;
 For he show'd to them a pillar,
 In the which, a stone when loosen'd
 Led unto a treasure chamber,
 Heap'd with gold and costly jewels.
 Straightway came in haste his kindred,
 All his clan came thronging round him,
 Eager to advance their claim;
 Each was nearer than the other.

100

And Iamblichus, the blooming, 110
 Young in face, and form, and feature,
 Stood an ancestor among them.
 All bewilder'd heard he legends
 Of his son and of his grandsons,
 Fathers of the men before him.
 So amazed he stood and listen'd,
 Patriarch in his early manhood;
 While the crowd around him gather'd,
 Stalwart men, and mighty captains,
 Him, the youngest, to acknowledge 120
 As the founder of their race!
 And one token with another
 Made assurance doubly certain;
 None could doubt the wondrous story
 Of himself and of his comrades.

Shortly, to the cave returning,
 King and people all go with him,
 And they saw him enter in.
 But no more to king or people,
 Did the Chosen reappear. 130
 For the Seven, who long had tarried—
 Nay, but they were Eight in number,
 For the faithful dog was with them—
 Thenceforth from the world were sunder'd.
 The most blessed angel Gabriel,
 By the will of God Almighty,
 Walling up the cave for ever,
 Led them unto Paradise.

THE PARIAH

I

THE PARIAH'S PRAYER.

HEAR me, Brama, bending lowly!
 All from thee derive their being;
 Therefore art thou just and holy!
 Is it, Lord, of thy decreeing,
 That the Brahmins, high-estated,
 Only should thy bounty gather,
 Only dare to call thee, Father,
 When us too thou hast created?
 We are noble, Lord, in nothing!
 Woe, and want, and labour pain us; 10
 What all others shun with loathing,
 Is the food that must sustain us.

When the scorn of caste is loudest,
 All we'd bear without repining,
 Were thy face toward us shining,
 For thou canst rebuke the proudest.

Therefore, Lord, hear my entreaty !
 Raise me from this foul defilement,
 Or a Saviour send, in pity,
 For the work of reconciliation.
 Didst thou not a Bayaderé
 Lift from wretchedness to glory ?
 Yea, we Pariahs have a story,
 Giving comfort to the weary.

20

II

THE PARIAH'S LEGEND.

Water from the sacred Ganges,
 To bring water from the river,
 Goes the noble Brahmin's wife.
 She was chaste, and pure, and lovely ;
 High, immaculate, and honour'd,
 And of sternest justice he.
 Daily from the sacred river
 Does she fetch the pleasant water ;
 Not in pitcher nor in vessel,
 For she hath no need of these.
 Rises of itself the water,
 Rolled into a ball of crystal,
 To the stainless heart and hand
 (Such the power of perfect virtue,
 Innocence without a shadow),
 And she bears it to her home.

30

40

This day comes she in the morning,
 Praying, to the flood of Ganges,
 Bending lightly o'er the stream ;
 There she sees, as in a mirror,
 From the heaven above reflected,
 Floating in the liquid ether,
 Such a glorious apparition !
 Image of a youth, created
 By the thought of the Almighty,
 As a form of perfect beauty.
 On the wondrous vision gazing,
 Feels she straight a new sensation
 Thrill throughout her inmost being ;
 Fascinated still she lingers,
 Lingers with a secret longing ;

50

Wishes it would pass, but ever
 Floats the image back again.
 In amazement, in confusion,
 Stoops she to the flowing Ganges,
 Trying, with her trembling fingers,
 From the stream a ball to fashion.
 But alas, the spell is broken!
 For the holy water shuns her,
 Seems to shrink as she approaches,
 Whirling swiftly from her hands.

60

Nerveless drop her arms, she totters;
 Scarce her fainting limbs can bear her,
 Scarce she knows the pathway homewards;
 Shall she fly, or shall she tarry?
 Thought forsakes her; help and counsel
 Are to her that day denied.

70

So she comes before her husband.
 And he looks—his look is judgement!
 Silently the sword he seizes,
 Leads her to the hill of terrors,
 Where adulterers meet their doom.
 How can she, the wife, resist him?
 What extenuation offer,
 Guilty, knowing not her crime?

With the bloody sword yet dripping,
 Homeward to his silent dwelling
 Went the inexorable man.
 Then his son came forth to meet him—
 'Whose that blood? O father, father!'
 'Blood of an adulteress!' 'Never!
 On the blade it has not stiffened,
 As adulterous blood would do.
 Fresh as from the wound 'tis running.
 Mother, mother! O come hither!
 Unjust was my father never,
 What is this that he hath done?'

80

90

'Boy, be silent! *hers* the blood is!'
 'Whose?' 'Be silent!' 'O my mother!
 Is it then my mother's blood?
 What's her crime? I will be answer'd!
 Say, what evil hath she done?
 Here—the sword!—Lo, now I grasp it!
 Thou mightst slay thy wife unchalleng'd,
 But my mother shalt thou not!
 Wives through fire their husbands follow,

100

Children must avenge their mothers !
 As the flames unto the widow,
 Is the sword unto the son !'

'Hold thy hand !' exclaim'd the father,
 'Yet there's time ; O hasten, hasten ;
 Join the head unto the body,
 Touch it with the sword of vengeance,
 And she'll follow thee alive !'

Rushing, breathless—what beholds he,
 Stretch'd upon the hill of terror ? 110
 Bodies of two slaughter'd women,
 And their heads are lying near.

Half distracted, blind, and dizzy,
 His dear mother's head he seizes,
 Does not even stay to kiss it,
 Joins it to the nearest body :
 Pointing then the sword of vengeance,
 Piously completes the spell.

Riseth straight a ghastly figure !
 From the dear lips of his mother, 120
 Sweet as ever, nowise alter'd,
 Comes this terrible bewail :

'Son, O son ! what fatal rashness !
 Yonder lies thy mother's body,
 Near it is the head polluted
 Of a wretched woman, victim
 To the just avenging sword.
 Me hast thou in hideous union
 Blent for ever with her body !
 Wise in will, but wild in doing, 130
 Must I move among the spirits.
 Yea, that godlike apparition,
 Which the eye might blameless look on,
 Which the brain might blameless think on,
 To the heart becomes a torment,
 Stirring passionate desire !

'Still that image must beset me !
 Sometimes rising, sometimes falling,
 Sometimes bright, and sometimes darken'd,
 Such is mighty Brama's will. 140
 He it was who sent the vision,
 Floating on its angel pinions,
 Radiant face and form so graceful,

God-created in its beauty,
 For my trial and temptation ;
 Since from heaven we may be tempted,
 If the Gods decree it so.
 So must I, a sad Brahmina,
 With my head to heaven pertaining,
 Feel the gross and earthly passion
 Of the Pariah evermore !

150

‘ Go, my son, unto thy father !
 Be of comfort ! Let no penance,
 Dull remorse, or hope of merit,
 Through a weary expiation,
 Drive him to the wilderness.
 Go ye forth among the people,
 And, so long as speech remaineth,
 Tell, O tell the meanest creature,
 That him also Brama hears !

160

‘ For with Him there is no meanness,
 In his sight are all men equal.
 Be he leper, be he outcast,
 Be he sunk in want and sorrow,
 Be he desolate, heart-broken,
 Be he Brahmin, be he Pariah—
 Whosoever prays for mercy,
 He shall have it, he shall find it,
 When he turns his face to heaven.
 Thousand eyes are watching yonder,
 Thousand ears are ever listening,
 Everything to God is known.

170

‘ When I pass before his footstool,
 Me beholding, thus distorted
 By a vile transfiguration,
 Surely will the Father pity.
 Yet my curse may be a blessing,
 Unto you, my son, and many.
 For, in humble adoration,
 Meekly shall I strive to utter,
 What the higher sense inspires ;
 Then, in frenzied adjuration,
 Shall I tell him all the passion,
 That is raging in this bosom.
 Thought and impulse, will and weakness—
 Mystery of mysteries !’

180

III

THE PARIAH'S THANKSGIVING.

Mighty Brama! I adore thee,
 Maker thou of all creation;
 And I dare to come before thee,
 With my lowly supplication.

190

No respect for race thou showest,
 Giving unto each a token,
 E'en to us, the meanest, lowest,
 Are the words of comfort spoken.

Thou hast heard that woman's story,
 Thou hast heard her cruel sentence.
 Lord! that art enshrin'd in glory,
 Look in mercy on repentance!

THE CAVALIER'S CHOICE

THIS lively little ballad occurs in one of Goethe's Operas, very charming compositions, which probably are less read than they deserve. It is not altogether original, being evidently founded on a popular Scottish ditty, called indiscriminately 'Captain Wedderburn's Courtship', or 'The Laird of Roslin's Daughter', in which precisely the same questions are propounded and answered. Truth compels us to say that, in point of merit, the superiority lies with the Scottish ballad. This being a case of disputed property, or rather common property, the translator has allowed himself more license in rendering than has been used in any other instance in the present collection.

[*Blackwood's Magazine*, February 1845]

It was a gallant cavalier
 Of honour and renown,
 And all to seek a ladye-love
 He rode from town to town.
 Till at a widow-woman's door
 He drew the rein so free;
 For at her side the knight espied
 Her comely daughters three.

Well might he gaze upon them,
 For they were fair and tall;
 Ye never have seen fairer maids,
 In bower nor yet in hall.
 Small marvel if the gallant's heart
 Beat quicker in his breast:
 'Twas hard to choose, and hard to lose—
 How might he wale the best?

10

- 'Now, maidens, pretty maidens mine,
Who'll rede me riddles three?
And she who answers best of all
Shall be my own ladye!' 20
- I ween they blush'd as maidens do,
When such rare words they hear—
'Now speak thy riddles, if thou wilt,
Thou gay young cavalier!'
- 'What's longer than the longest path?
First tell ye that to me;
And tell me what is deeper yet,
Than is the deepest sea?
And tell me what is louder far,
Than is the loudest horn? 30
And tell me what hath sharper point,
Than e'en the sharpest thorn?
- 'And tell me what is greener yet,
Than greenest grass on hill?
And tell me what is crueller
Than a wicked woman's will?'
The eldest and the second maid,
They mused and thought awhile;
But the youngest she looked upward,
And spoke with merry smile: 40
- 'O, love is surely longer far,
Than the longest paths that be;
And hell, they say, is deeper yet,
Than is the deepest sea;
The roll of thunder is more loud,
Than is the loudest horn;
And hunger it is worse to bear
Than sharpest wound of thorn;
- 'The copper sweat is greener yet,
Than is the grass on hill;
And the foul fiend he is crueller
Than any woman's will!' 50
He leapt so lightly from his steed,
He took her by the hand;
'Sweet maid, my riddles thou hast read,
Be lady of my land!'
- The eldest and the second maid,
They ponder'd and were dumb;
And there, perchance, are waiting yet
Till another wooer come. 60
Then, maidens, take this warning word,
Be neither slow nor shy,
But always, when a lover speaks,
Look kindly, and reply.

THE KING IN THULE

A KING there was in Thule,
 Kept troth unto the grave;
 The maid he loved so truly
 A goblet to him gave.
 And ever set before him
 At banquet was the cup;
 And saddening thoughts came o'er him,
 Whene'er he took it up.
 When Death with him had spoken,
 His treasures ranged he there, 10
 And all, save one dear token,
 He gifted to his heir.
 Once more to royal wassail
 His peers he summon'd all;
 Around were knight and vassal
 Throng'd in his father's hall.
 Then rose the grand old Rover,
 Again the cup drain'd he,
 And bravely flung it over 20
 Into the welt'ring sea.
 He saw it flashing, falling,
 And settling in the main,
 Heard Death unto him calling—
 He never drank again!

 THE DOLEFUL LAY OF THE WIFE OF
 ASAN AGA.

THIS beautiful poem, purporting to be a translation from the Morlachian, was first printed in Herder's admirable collection of ballads, translated into German from almost every European language, and published under the title of *Volkslieder*. The fine poetic instinct of Goethe was signally displayed in this composition; for although, as Mickiewicz has observed (*Les Slaves*, tome i. p. 323, Paris, 1819), he had to divine the import of the poem across three bad translations, and was at the same time ignorant of the Slavic language, he produced a perfect version, having instinctively detected and avoided the faults of the previous translators.

[*Blackwood's Magazine*, July 1844]

WHAT is yon so white beside the greenwood?
 Is it snow, or flight of cygnets resting?
 Were it snow, ere now it had been melted;
 Were it swans, ere now the flock had left us.

Neither snow nor swans are resting yonder,
 'Tis the glittering tents of Asan Aga.
 Faint he lies from wounds in stormy battle;
 There his mother and his sisters seek him,
 But his wife hangs back for shame, and comes not.

When the anguish of his hurts was over, 10
 To his faithful wife he sent this message—
 'Longer 'neath my roof thou shalt not tarry,
 Neither in my court nor in my household.'

When the lady heard that cruel sentence,
 'Reft of sense she stood, and rack'd with anguish :
 In the court she heard the horses stamping,
 And in fear that it was Asan coming,
 Fled towards the tower, to leap and perish.

Then in terror ran her little daughters, 20
 Calling after her, and weeping sorely,
 'These are not the steeds of Father Asan ;
 'Tis our uncle Pintorovich coming !'

And the wife of Asan turn'd to meet him ;
 Sobbing, threw her arms around her brother.
 'See the wrongs, O brother, of thy sister !
 These five babes I bore, and must I leave them ?'

Silently the brother, from his girdle,
 Draws the ready deed of separation,
 Wrapp'd within a crimson silken cover.
 She is free to seek her mother's dwelling— 30
 Free to join in wedlock with another.

When the woeful lady saw the writing,
 Kiss'd she both her boys upon the forehead,
 Kiss'd on both the cheeks her sobbing daughters ;
 But she cannot tear herself for pity
 From the infant smiling in the cradle !

Rudely did her brother tear her from it,
 Deftly lifted her upon a courser,
 And in haste, towards his father's dwelling,
 Spurr'd he onward with the woeful lady. 40

Short the space ; seven days, but barely seven—
 Little space I ween—by many nobles
 Was the lady—still in weeds of mourning—
 Was the lady courted in espousal.

Far the noblest was Imoski's cad ;
 And the dame in tears besought her brother—

'I adjure thee, by the life thou bearest,
Give me not a second time in marriage,
That my heart may not be rent asunder
If again I see my darling children !'

50

Little reck'd the brother of her bidding,
Fix'd to wed her to Imoski's cadi.
But the gentle lady still entreats him—
'Send at least a letter, O my brother!
To Imoski's cadi, thus imploring—
I, the youthful widow, greet thee fairly,
And entreat thee, by this self-same token,
When thou comest hither with thy bridesmen,
Bring a heavy veil, that I may shroud me
As we pass along by Asan's dwelling,
So I may not see my darling orphans.'

60

Scarcely had the cadi read the letter,
When he call'd together all his bridesmen ;
Boune himself to bring the lady homewards,
And he brought the veil as she entreated.

Jocundly they reach'd the princely mansion,
Jocundly they bore her thence in triumph ;
But, when they drew near to Asan's dwelling,
Then the children recognized their mother,
And they cried, 'Come back unto thy chamber—
Share the meal this evening with thy children !'
Then she turn'd her to the lordly bridegroom—
'Pray thee, let the bridesmen and their horses
Halt a little by the once-loved dwelling,
Till I give these presents to my children.'

70

And they halted by the once-loved dwelling,
And she gave the weeping children presents,
Gave each boy a cap with gold embroider'd,
Gave each girl a gay and costly garment,
And with tears she left a tiny mantle
For the helpless baby in the cradle.

80

These things mark'd the father, Asan Aga,
And in sorrow call'd he to his children—
'Turn again to me, ye poor deserted ;
Hard as steel is now your mother's bosom ;
Shut so fast, it cannot throb with pity !'
Thus he spoke ; and when the lady heard him,
Pale as death she dropp'd upon the pavement ;
And the life fled from her wretched bosom,
As she saw her children turning from her.

90

THE ARTIST'S MORNING SONG

[*Blackwood's Magazine*, October 1844]

My dwelling is the Muses' home—
 What matters it how small?
 And here, within my heart, is set
 The holiest place of all.

When, waken'd by the early sun,
 I rise from slumbers sound,
 I see the ever-living forms
 In radiance group'd around.

I pray, and songs of thanks and praise
 Are more than half my prayer, 10
 With simple notes of music, tuned
 To some harmonious air.

I bow before the altar then,
 And read, as well I may,
 From noble Homer's master-work,
 The lesson for the day.

He takes me to the furious fight,
 Where lion-warriors throng;
 Where god-descended heroes whirl
 In iron cars along. 20

And steeds go down before the cars;
 And round the cumber'd wheel,
 Both friend and foe are rolling now,
 All blood from head to heel!

Then comes the champion of them all,
 Pelides' friend is he,
 And crashes through the dense array,
 Though thousands ten they be!

And ever smites that fiery sword
 Through helmet, shield, and mail, 30
 Until he falls, by craft divine,
 Where might could not prevail.

Down from the glorious pile he rolls,
 Which he himself had made,
 And foemen trample on the limbs
 From which they shrank afraid.

Then start I up, with arms in hand,
 What arms the painter bears;
 And soon along my kindling wall
 The fight at Troy appears. 40

On! on again! The wrath is here
 Of battle rolling red;
 Shield strikes on shield, and sword on helm,
 And dead men fall on dead!

I throng into the inner press,
 Where loudest rings the din;
 For there, around their hero's corpse,
 Fight on his furious kin!

A rescue! rescue! bear him hence
 Into the leaguer near;
 Pour balsam in his glorious wounds,
 And weep above his bier!

50

And when from that hot trance I pass,
 Great Love, I feel thy charm;
 There hangs my lady's picture near—
 A picture, yet so warm!

How fair she was, reclining there;
 What languish in her look!
 How thrill'd her glance through all my frame,
 The very pencil shook.

60

Her eyes, her cheeks, her lovely lips,
 Were all the world to me;
 And in my breast a younger life
 Rose wild and wantonly.

Oh! turn again, and bide thee here,
 Nor fear such rude alarms;
 How could I think of battles more
 With thee within my arms!

But thou shalt lend thy perfect form
 To all I fashion best;
 I'll paint thee first, Madonna-wise,
 The infant on thy breast.

70

I'll paint thee as a startled nymph,
 Myself a following faun;
 And still pursue thy flying feet
 Across the woodland lawn.

With helm on head, like Mars, I'll lie
 By thee, the Queen of Love,
 And drew a net around us twain,
 And smile on heaven above:

80

And every god that comes shall pour
 His blessings on thy head,
 And envious eyes be far away
 From that dear marriage-bed!

CUPID AS A LANDSCAPE PAINTER

[*Blackwood's Magazine*, October 1844]

ONCE I sate upon a mountain,
Gazing on the mist before me;
Like a great grey sheet of canvas,
Shrouding all things in its cover,
Did it float 'twixt earth and heaven.

Then a child appear'd beside me,
Saying, 'Friend, it is not seemly,
Thus to gaze in idle wonder,
With that noble breadth before thee.
Hast thou lost thine inspiration?
Hath the spirit of the painter
Died within thee utterly?' 10

But I turn'd and look'd upon him,
Speaking not, but thinking inly,
'Will he read a lesson now!'

'Folded hands,' pursued the infant,
'Never yet have won a triumph.
Look! I'll paint for thee a picture
Such as none have seen before.'

And he pointed with his finger,
Which like any rose was ruddy;
And upon the breadth of vapour
With that finger 'gan to draw. 20

First a glorious sun he painted,
Dazzling when I look'd upon it;
And he made the inner border
Of the clouds around it golden,
With the light rays through the masses
Pouring down in streams of splendour.
Then the tender taper summits
Of the trees, all leaf and glitter, 30
Started from the sullen void;
And the slopes behind them rising,
Graceful-lined in undulation,
Glided backwards one by one.
Underneath, be sure, was water;
And the stream was drawn so truly,
That it seem'd to break and shimmer,
That it seem'd as if cascading
From the lofty rolling wheel. 40

There were flowers beside the brooklet;
There were colours on the meadow—

Gold and azure, green and purple,
 Emerald and bright carbuncle.
 Clear and pure he work'd the ether
 As with lapis-lazuli,
 And the mountains in the distance
 Stretching blue and far away—
 All so well, that I, in rapture
 At the second revelation,
 Turn'd to gaze upon the painter,
 From the picture which he drew.

50

'Have I not,' he said, 'convinced thee
 That I know the painter's secret?
 Yet the greatest is to come.'

Then he drew with gentle finger,
 Still more delicately pointed,
 In the wood, about its margin,
 Where the sun within the water
 Glanced as from the clearest mirror,
 Such a maiden's form!
 Perfect shape in perfect raiment,
 Fair young cheeks 'neath glossy ringlets,
 And the cheeks were of the colour
 Of the finger whence they came.

60

'Child,' I cried, 'what wondrous master
 In his school of art hath form'd thee,
 That so deftly, and so truly,
 From the sketch unto the burnish,
 Thou hast finish'd such a gem?'

70

As I spoke, a breeze arising
 Stirr'd the tree-tops in the picture,
 Ruffled every pool of water,
 Waved the garments of the maiden;
 And, what more than all amazed me,
 Her small feet took motion also,
 And she came towards the station
 Where I sat beside the boy.

So, when everything was moving,
 Leaves and water, flowers and raiment,
 And the footsteps of the darling—
 Think you I remain'd as lifeless
 As the rock on which I rested?
 No, I trow—not I!

80

THE HAPPY PAIR

It came and went so lightly,
 That pleasant summer rain;
 Now see, dear wife, how brightly
 Laughs out our own domain.
 Far, far into the distance
 The eager eye can roam,
 But here is true existence.
 And here a happy home.

Down fly the pigeons cooing,
 The pretty graceful things! 10
 So gentle in their wooing,
 Beside the fairy springs.
 Where, gathering flowers together,
 A garland first I wove,
 In bright and sunny weather,
 For thee, my only love!

Another wreath I plaited,
 As well rememberest thou,
 That day when we were mated,
 And took the happy vow. 20
 The world was all before us,
 To make or choose our way;
 And years have stolen o'er us,
 Since that most blessed day.

The vow which then was spoken,
 A thousand times we've seal'd,
 By many a tender token,
 In thicket and in field;
 On Alpine heights we've tarried,
 Together still were we; 30
 Yea, Love for us hath carried
 His torch across the sea.

Contented and caressing,
 What could we wish for more?
 God sent a greater blessing,
 We counted three and four;
 Two more have join'd the party,
 The little prattling elves!
 But now they're strong and hearty,
 And taller than ourselves. 40

That story needs no telling;
 I see you looking down
 On yonder new-built dwelling,
 Amid the poplars brown.

May all good angels guide him!
 For there our eldest sits,
 His winsome wife beside him,
 Our own beloved Fritz.

How pleasant is the clatter,
 'Tis like a measured reel, 50
 As yonder falling water
 Goes foaming o'er the wheel!
 In many a song and ditty,
 Are miller's wives called fair;
 But none are half so pretty
 As our dear daughter there.

Ah yes! I do not wonder
 Your eye should rest e'en now,
 Upon the hillock yonder,
 Where dark the fir-trees grow. 60
 There lie our babes together,
 Beneath the daisied sod;
 But they have seen Our Father,
 And pray for us to God!

Look up! look up! for, glancing,
 The glint of arms appears;
 And sound of music dancing,
 Strikes full upon my ears!
 With trophies carried o'er them,
 In freedom's battle won, 70
 Who walks so proud before them?
 'Tis Carl! it is my son!

The Rose he loves so dearly
 Is blushing on his breast—
 Oh, wife! what follows nearly?
 Our hero's marriage-feast!
 Methinks I see the wedding,
 The dancers and the glee,
 And merriest measure treading,
 Our youngest children three! 80

The happy faces round us
 Will then recall the tide,
 The blessed day that bound us
 As bridegroom and as bride.
 Nay, tarry here and listen!
 Ere yet the year is done,
 Our good old priest shall christen
 A grandchild and a son.

THE YOUTH AND THE MILL-STREAM

YOUTH.

Pretty brooklet, gaily glancing
 In the morning sun,
 Why so joyous in thy dancing?
 Whither dost thou run?
 What is't lures thee to the vale?
 Tell me, if thou hast a tale.

BROOK.

Youth! I was a brooklet lately,
 Wandering at my will;
 Then I might have moved sedately;
 Now, to yonder mill, 10
 Must I hurry, swift and strong,
 Therefore do I race along.

YOUTH.

Brooklet, happy in thy duty,
 Nathless thou art free;
 Knowest not the power of beauty
 That enchaineth me!
 Looks the miller's comely daughter
 Ever kindly on thy water?

BROOK.

Early comes she every morning,
 From some blissful dream; 20
 And, so sweet in her adorning,
 Bends above my stream.
 Then her bosom, white as snow,
 Makes my chilly waters glow.

YOUTH.

If her beauty brings such gladness,
 Brooklet, unto thee,
 Marvel not if I to madness
 Should enflamed be.
 O that I could hope to move her!
 Once to see her is to love her. 30

BROOK.

Then careering—ah, so proudly!
 Rush I o'er the wheel,
 And the merry mill speaks loudly,
 All the joy I feel.
 Show me but the miller's daughter,
 And more swiftly flows my water.

YOUTH.

Nay, but, brooklet, tell me truly,
 Feelest thou no pain,
 When she smiles, and bids thee duly
 Go, nor turn again?
 Hath that simple smile no cunning,
 Brook, to stay thee in thy running?

40

BROOK.

Hard it is to lose her shadow,
 Hard to pass away;
 Slowly, sadly, down the meadow,
 Uninspired I stray.
 O, if I might have my will,
 Back to her I'd hasten still!

YOUTH.

Brook! my love thou comprehendest;
 Fare-thee-well a while;
 One day, when thou hither wendest,
 May'st thou see me smile.
 Go, and in thy gentlest fashion,
 Tell that maiden all my passion!

50

POESY

WHEN men were rude, and rough, and wild,
 Jove sent down Law, and Art, and Knowledge,
 To form on earth a kind of college,
 And make the savage creatures mild.

But the poor Virtues, when they came,
 Had nought to hide their nakedness,
 Till Poesy the lack supplied,
 And clothed them in her seemliest dress.

THE MUSAGETES

OFTEN in the winter midnight,
 Pray'd I to the blessed Muses—
 'Here is not the red of morning,
 Tardy is the day in breaking;
 Light for me, ye blessed Muses,
 Light the lamp of inspiration,
 That its mellow ray may serve me,
 'Stead of Phoebus and Aurora!'

THE MUSAGETES

401

But they left me to my slumber,
Dull, and spiritless, and torpid ;
And the morning's lazy leisure
Usher'd in a useless day. 10

Then, when spring began to kindle,
Thus the nightingales I conjured—
'Sweetest nightingales, O warble,
Warble early at my window!
Wake me from the heavy slumber
That in magic fetters holds me !'
And the love-o'erflowing singers
Sang all night around my window 20
All their rarest melodies ;
Kept awake the soul within me ;
Gave me trances, aspirations,
Glimpses of divine emotion,
Soothing, melting, undefined.
So the night pass'd lightly over,
And Aurora found me sleeping,
Scarce I waken'd with the sun.

Lastly, came the glorious summer :
What aroused me then from dreaming, 30
At the earliest dawn of morning ?
'Twas the buzzing of the flies !
They are touch'd by no compassion,
Ruthlessly they do their duty ;
Though the half-awaken'd sleeper
Greets them with a malediction.
Unabash'd their clan they summon,
And the humming swarm is vocal,
And they banish from my eyelids
All the luxury of sleep. 40

Straightway start I from my pillow,
Leave the close beleaguer'd chamber,
Sally out to seek the Muses,
In the haunts to them are dearest.
And I find them 'neath the beeches,
Waiting for me, sometimes chiding,
For my over-long delay.
Thus I owe you, libel'd insects,
Thanks for many hours of rapture.
Dullards may indeed abuse you, 50
Since you wake them to sensation ;
But the poet ought to prize you,
And I thank you, as a poet,
Ranking you, before all others,
As the ushers to the Muse.

THE CHURCH WINDOW

THE Minster window, richly glowing,
 With many a gorgeous stain and dye,
 Itself a parable, is showing,
 The might, the power of Poesy.

Look on it from the outer square,
 And it is only dark and dreary;
 Yon blockhead always views it there,
 And swears its aspect makes him weary.

But enter once the holy portal—
 What splendour bursts upon the eye! 10
 There symbols, deeds, and forms immortal,
 Are blazing forth in majesty.

Be thankful you, who have the gift
 To read and feel each sacred story;
 And O, be reverent, when you lift
 Your eyes to look on heavenly glory!

LILI'S PARK

THIS curious poem marks the period when Goethe, unfortunately for himself, broke off his engagement to Anna Schöne-mann, whom he has celebrated under the pseudonym of 'Lili'.

THERE's no menagerie, I trow,
 So varied as my Lili's now.
 The strangest beasts she keeps therein,—
 Heaven knows how she procured them all!
 The wild, the tame, the thick, the thin,
 The great, the middling, and the small.
 O how they strut and swagger madly,
 And flap their close-clipp'd wings in vain!
 Poor princes, metamorphosed sadly,
 And doom'd to love's eternal pain. 10

Who the fairy? who the Circe?
 Is it Lili?—ask not me;
 But be thankful for the mercy,
 If she is not known to thee!
 What a gabbling, what a squeaking!
 At the door she takes her stand,
 With the basket in her hand;
 Then the herd comes wildly shrieking!
 Trees and bushes, they are bending
 With the weight of songsters sweet; 20
 Larger creatures, hither wending,
 Roll and grovel at her feet.

Such devotion! 'tis amazing!
 Saw ye ever such a rout?
 E'en the fishes in the basin,
 Bob their stupid noses out!
 Then her daily dole she scatters,
 With a look, that might ensnare
 Jove or Hermes, were they there,
 Bent on less terrestrial matters. 30
 What a gaping! what a biting!
 What a wrestling! what a fighting!
 What a coil with teeth and claws!
 What a fight with bill and paws!
 What a tumbling, thronging, snatching,
 Each at other fiercely catching!
 What a chasing, and a racing,
 For the crumbs so loosely shed!
 Ah! Enchantress Lili, placing
 But her hand upon the bread, 40
 Gives it an ambrosial flavour,
 Steeps it in celestial savour!

O, but her look! O, but her tone!
 'Pipi! Pipi!' you hear her crying;
 And Jove's own eagle, from his throne,
 Would come before her, gently flying;
 The turtle-doves of Aphrodite,
 Would answer gladly to her call;
 And Juno's peacocks, not too flighty,
 Would stoop from the Olympian hall. 50
 They could not help it, sage or silly,
 If once they heard the voice of Lili!

And what has this enchantress done?
 A great wild bear, unlick'd and rude,
 She lured from out his native wood,
 And made him move in unison
 With other beasts that tamer be,
 (Up to a certain point, d'ye see?)
 For slightly savage still was he!
 Alas! how gracious and how good 60
 Seem'd then to me that gentle warden!
 She might have ask'd me for my blood,
 To nurture flowers within her garden.

'Ask'd *you*? Pray, sir, explain your riddle!'
 In brief, 'tis I that am the bear;
 Not prone to dance to every fiddle,
 But surely tangled in a snare.
 An apron-net was strong enough
 To make my capture quite complete;

A silken thread has brought the rough 70
 Half-savage Bruin to her feet.
 The story I may tell hereafter—
 To-day, I'm not disposed for laughter.
 Well! I am standing, rather sulky,
 Within a corner; hear the screeching,
 And all the manifold beseeching,
 Of creatures that are not so bulky.
 I turn me round; a growl I utter,
 Then move as if to go away.
 I cannot; so again I mutter, 80
 And in despite of self must stay.
 Suddenly a fit of passion
 Comes upon me; wild I grow,
 And I hurry to and fro,
 Snorting in most bear-like fashion!
 'What! be treated like a hare?
 Made a fool of, and a noodle?
 Like the wretched squirrel there,
 Or that meanest beast, her poodle!' 90
 Rise the bristles on my back—
 'No! a slave I will not be!
 And I fly; but in my track,
 Every bush and every tree,
 Upstarts, seem to scoff at me!
 O'er the bowling-green I scour,
 Slipping on the close-mown grass,
 And a box-tree near the bower
 Grins derision as I pass!
 Crashing thro' the deepest thicket,
 Now I try to leap the pale, 100
 Since I cannot ope the wicket:
 Woe is me! alas, I fail!
 I can neither climb nor vault;
 Magic brings me to a halt;
 Magic weighs me down like lead.
 So, with aching limbs and head,
 Plod I to a quiet glade,
 Where a miniature cascade,
 Fashion'd by some artist's cunning,
 Over shells and stones is running. 110
 There I roll, and pant, and blow,
 Whine and whimper in my pain;
 With rare audience for my woe—
 Oreads of porcelain!
 Ah, what sound, what voice divine,
 Comes upon my senses stealing,
 With a strain so rich and fine,
 Calming every tortured feeling?

O, the bliss that music bringeth,
Lili in her arbour singeth !

120

'O matchless voice for ever dear !
The very air grows warm around !
Ah, does she sing that I may hear ?'
And, quite distracted by the sound,
I trample down the shrubs and flowers,
I burst into her loved retreat—
Be gracious, O ye heavenly powers ;
For lo—the bear is at her feet !

'Well ! you *are* the drollest creature !

Quite a monster with that hair ;
Shagged, ragged, grim in feature,
Yet so gentle for a bear.'

130

With her foot my back caressing,
Me she sends to Paradise !
Never felt I such a blessing—
O that heavenly, heavenly pressing !
But there's calm within her eyes.

I kiss her shoes, I lick their sole,
As courteous as a bear may be,
And then, entranced beyond control,
I lay my head upon her knee.

140

She lets me do it : nay, she tickles
My ear in very sportive mood ;
I feel as if a thousand prickles
Were running thro' my flesh and blood !

In ecstasy I try to purr,
Perhaps it had been wiser not ;
For my attempt extorts from her—

'*Allons tout doux ! eh la menotte !*

Et faites serviteur,

Comme un joli Seigneur.'

150

So never does she cease her funning ;
The poor fond beast, so oft betray'd,
Yet plumes himself upon his cunning,
And thinks that he has pleased the maid.
His abject homage was regarded ;
Drop that, and he's at once discarded.

But O, she is a witch indeed !

She carries still a vial precious,
Fill'd with a balsam so delicious,
As shames the draught of Ganymede.

160

One drop of that, upon my tongue,
She placed with her enchanting finger,
Then forthwith from the arbour sprung ;
I could not stay, I could not linger !

I still must follow in her train,
 I seek, I tremble, turn again,
 But will I have not of my own.
 Sometimes I thought I might have flown ;
 But aye she stands beside the door ;
 She holds it open, trips before,
 But gives me such a witching smile,
 That, tho' I know her wonted wile,
 I cannot leave her all the while ! 170

Ye gods, of whom the ancients tell !
 Witchcraft by you was always hated ;
 You might relieve me from this spell,
 But you are dotards, or translated.
 The rage for freedom stirs throughout my being :
 I must be free ! Myself will force my freeing ! 180

THE WEDDING FEAST

I CHANCED to walk, not long ago,
 Into the village down below ;
 The people all were gaily drest,
 They told me 'twas a marriage feast.

Within the dancing-room I found
 Some sixty couples whirling round ;
 Each lass supported by her lad,
 And every face was blithe and glad.

'A happy day, indeed !' I cried ;
 'But tell me, which may be the bride ?'
 The bumpkin answer'd with a stare—
 'Lord, sir ! I neither know nor care !' 190

'Three nights have we been dancing here,
 And tasting of her wedding cheer ;
 I merely came for fun and drinking.
 About the bride I've not been thinking !'

If every man would speak the truth,
 As freely as this honest youth.
 His case would not—so ponder'd I—
 Betoken singularity.

PSYCHE

THE Muses, maiden sisters, chose
 To teach poor Psyche arts poetic;
 But, spite of all their rules aesthetic,
 She never could emerge from prose.

No dulcet sounds escaped her lyre,
 E'en when the summer nights were nigh;
 Till Cupid came, with glance of fire,
 And taught her all the mystery.

THE TREACHEROUS MAID OF THE MILL

Lo! here is our comrade—he's racing along,
 Ere day break his exercise taking;
 Has he been to the chapel to hear matin-song?
 With cold his poor bones must be aching!
 The brook lies before him; barefooted he goes,
 Through the ice-water manfully tearing!
 What says he? An orison twang'd through his nose?
 Ah no, my dear friend, he is swearing!

Alas! from a bed that he slyly bespoke,
 He has started with wonderful vigour, 10
 And, save for the sheltering folds of his cloak,
 He would cut a most ludicrous figure.
 Some impudent scoundrel has seized on his coat,
 His vest, and his breeches, for payment;
 And sent our poor friend, on the highway to trot,
 Like Adam, in primitive raiment.

The reason? I'll tell you—he'll tell you, the dunce!
 For his shame is too plain to be hidden;
 Down there at the mill, as in Paradise once,
 Grows fruit which is strictly forbidden. 20
 Our friend has been poaching! Such dangerous trips
 End seldom except in vexation;
 Let him in, give him liquor, and from his own lips
 Let us hear his absurd lamentation.

'In the amorous glance of the brown maiden's eye,
 No treachery did I discover;
 She loved me, adored me—she said so; and I
 Was exceedingly pleased as her lover.
 How could I imagine, while sweetly caress'd,
 What horrible thoughts she was hatching? 30
 I was very content as she clung to my breast,
 Some hundreds of kisses despatching.

'It was pleasant enough, till the deep of the night,
 When I found myself, somehow or other,
 Disrobed of my daily habiliments quite;
 Then the damsel shriek'd out for her mother!
 Saint Paul! what a horrible rush was there then!
 Nay, listen, my dear friends, with patience—
 A mother, a brother, of cousins full ten,
 Aunts, uncles, and other relations!

40

'Then a clamour arose might have waken'd the dead!
 Like tiger-cats fierce they were squalling!
 "Her honour! her honour!" the women folk said;
 "Her virtue!" the strong knaves kept bawling.
 And all this to me, an unfortunate youth,
 Who really was guiltless of sinning!
 For a wiser than I had been baffled, in truth,
 Had he taken the odds for the winning.

'Her virtue! If Cupid is vigilant still,
 If his aim, as of yore, is as steady,
 I rather imagine, that maid of the mill
 Knows some of his secrets already!
 In short, sirs, they eagerly pounced on my dress,
 Coat, waistcoat, and breeches of kersey,
 A fund of division for twenty, not less;
 That I saved my old cloak was a mercy!

50

'I leap'd on the floor; I struggled and swore,
 To get out was my only endeavour;
 And there stood the maiden, quite close to the door,
 With a smile as enchanting as ever!
 So frantic was I that the boldest gave way;
 I cleft them, like hay-bands, asunder:
 They let me go forth, in my simple array;
 Save my cloak, there was nothing to plunder.

60

'You laugh, sirs, at this! well, I fairly must own,
 No whit you're securer from pillage,
 Should you leave the more elegant nymphs of the town,
 To prowl after nymphs of the village.
 Let women have lovers, as oft as they will,
 And change, without any disclosure;
 But never with scandal, like her of the mill.
 Subject them to shameful exposure.'

70

So told us his story, our shivering friend,
 And we shouted in mirthful derision;
 No grain of compassion had we to expend,
 On a gallant in such a condition.

For richly deserves he sore penance to pay,
 The youth, who, from constancy falling,
 Pays court to an innocent maiden by day,
 And at night sallies forth caterwauling! 80

WHO'LL BUY A CUPID?

[*Blackwood's Magazine*, July 1844]

Of all the wares so pretty
 That come into the city,
 There's none are so delicious.
 There's none are half so precious,
 As those which we are bringing.
 O, listen to our singing!
 Young loves to sell! young loves to sell!
 My pretty loves who'll buy?

First look you at the oldest,
 The wantonest, the boldest! 10
 So loosely goes he hopping,
 From tree and thicket dropping,
 Then flies aloft as sprightly—
 We dare but praise him lightly!
 The fickle rogue! Young loves to sell!
 My pretty loves who'll buy?

Now see this little creature—
 How modest seems his feature!
 He nestles so demurely,
 You'd think him safer surely; 20
 And yet for all his shyness,
 There's danger in his slyness,
 The cunning rogue! Young loves to sell!
 My pretty loves who'll buy?

Oh come and see this lovelet,
 This little turtle-dovelet!
 The maidens that are neatest,
 The tenderest and sweetest,
 Should buy it to amuse 'em,
 And nurse it in their bosom. 30
 The little pet! Young loves to sell!
 My pretty loves who'll buy?

We need not bid you buy them,
 They're here, if you will try them.
 They like to change their cages;
 But for their proving sages
 No warrant will we utter—
 They all have wings to flutter.
 The pretty things! Young loves to sell!
 Such beauties! Come and buy! 40

SEPARATION

[*Blackwood's Magazine*, October 1844]

I THINK of thee whene'er the sun is glowing
 Upon the lake;
 Of thee, when in the crystal fountain flowing
 The moonbeams shake.

I see thee when the wanton wind is busy,
 And dust-clouds rise;
 In the deep night, when o'er the bridge so dizzy
 The wanderer hies.

I hear thee when the waves, with hollow roaring,
 Gush forth their fill;
 Often along the heath I go exploring,
 When all is still.

I am with thee! Though far thou art and darkling,
 Yet art thou near.
 The sun goes down, the stars will soon be sparkling—
 Oh, wert thou here!

SECOND LIFE

[*Blackwood's Magazine*, July 1844]

AFTER life's departing sigh,
 To the spots I loved most dearly,
 In the sunshine and the shadow,
 By the fountain welling clearly,
 Through the wood and o'er the meadow,
 Flit I like a butterfly.

There a gentle pair I spy.
 Round the maiden's tresses flying,
 From her chaplet I discover
 All that I had lost in dying.
 Still with her and with her lover.
 Who so happy then as I?

For she smiles with laughing eye;
 And his lips to hers he presses,
 Vows of passion interchanging,
 Stifling her with sweet caresses,
 O'er her budding beauties ranging;
 And around the twain I fly.

And she sees me fluttering nigh;
 And beneath his ardour trembling,
 Starts she up—then off I hover.
 'Look there, dearest!' Thus dissembling,
 Speaks the maiden to her lover—
 'Come and catch that butterfly!'

TO LUNA

SISTER of the earliest light,
 Type of loveliness in sorrow,
 Silver mists thy radiance borrow,
 Even as they cross thy sight.
 When thou comest to the sky,
 In their dusky hollows waken,
 Spirits that are sad, forsaken,
 Birds that shun the day, and I.

Looking downward far and wide.
 Hidden things thou dost discover. 10
 Luna! help a hapless lover,
 Lift him kindly to thy side!
 Aided by thy friendly beams,
 Let him, through the lattice peeping,
 Look into the room where, sleeping,
 Lies the maiden of his dreams.

Ah, I see her! Now I gaze,
 Bending in a trance Elysian,
 And I strain my inmost vision,
 And I gather all thy rays. 20
 Bright and brighter yet I see
 Charms no envious robes encumber;
 And she draws me to her slumber,
 As Endymion once drew thee.

THE SHEPHERD'S LAMENT

Up yonder on the mountain,
 I dwelt for days together;
 Look'd down into the valley.
 This pleasant summer weather.

My sheep go feeding onward,
 My dog sits watching by;
 I've wander'd to the valley,
 And yet I know not why.

The meadow it is pretty,
 With flowers so fair to see; 10
 I gather them, but no one
 Will take the flowers from me.

The good tree gives me shadow,
 And shelter from the rain;
 But yonder door is silent,
 It will not ope again!

I see the rainbow bending,
 Above her old abode,
 But she is there no longer;
 They've ta'en my love abroad. 20
 They took her o'er the mountains,
 They took her o'er the sea;
 Move on, move on, my bonny sheep,
 There is no rest for me!

TO THE MOON

FLOODED are the brakes and dell
 With thy phantom light,
 And my soul receives the spell
 Of thy mystic might.
 To the meadow dost thou send
 Something of thy grace,
 Like the kind eye of a friend,
 Beaming on my face.
 Echoes of departed times
 Vibrate in mine ear, 10
 Joyous, sad, like spirit-chimes,
 As I wander here.
 Flow, flow on, thou little brook;
 Ever onward go!
 Trusted heart, and tender look,
 Left me even so.
 Richer treasure earth has none
 Than I once possess'd—
 Ah, so rich, that when 'twas gone,
 Worthless was the rest. 20
 Little brook! adown the vale,
 Rush, and take my song;
 Give it passion, give it wail,
 As thou leap'st along.
 Sound it in the winter night,
 When thy streams are full;
 Murmur it when skies are bright,
 Mirror'd in the pool.
 Happiest he of all created,
 Who the world can shun, 30
 Not in hate, and yet unhated;
 Sharing thought with none,
 Save one faithful friend; revealing,
 To his kindly ear,
 Thoughts like these, which, o'er me stealing,
 Make the night so drear.

WITH A GOLDEN NECKLACE

ACCEPT, dear maid, this little token,
 A supple chain that fain would lie,
 And keep its tiny links unbroken
 Upon a neck of ivory.

Pray, then, exalt it to this duty,
 And change its humbleness to pride!
 By day, it will adorn your beauty,
 By night, 'tis quickly laid aside.

But if another hand should proffer
 A chain of weightier, closer kind, 10
 Think twice ere you accept the offer;
 For there are chains will not unbind.

ON THE LAKE

THIS little poem was composed during a tour in Switzerland in 1775. Several others in this series belong to the same period, being that when Goethe's passion for Anna Elizabeth Schöne-mann, the Lili of his poems, was at its height.

FREE is my heart from every weight,
 No care now cumbers me;
 O Nature, thou art grand and great,
 And beautiful to see!
 Our boat goes dancing o'er the wave,
 The rudder-track behind;
 And yonder rise the mountains brave;
 Blow fresh, blow fresh, thou wind!

What is this? Mine eyes are burning!
 Golden dreams, are ye returning? 10
 Vanish, golden though you be!
 Here is love and life for me.

The spray of the water
 Like star-showers is blown;
 The mists they draw upwards,
 From each mountain throne,
 The morning wind ripples
 The reach of the bay,
 And the trees in the mirror
 Are dancing alway. 20

TO LINA

LINA, rival of the linnet,
 When these lays shall reach thy hand,
 Please transfer them to the spinnet,
 Where thy friend was wont to stand.

Set the diapason ringing,
 Ponder not the words you see,
 Give them utterance by thy singing,
 Then each leaf belongs to thee.

With the life of music fill them;
 Cold the written verses seem,
 That, would Lina deign to trill them,
 Might be trancing as a dream.

10

TO A GOLDEN HEART

[*Blackwood's Magazine*, February 1845]

PLEDGE of departed bliss,
 Once gentlest, holiest token!
 Art thou more faithful than thy mistress is,
 That ever I must wear thee,
 And on my bosom bear thee,
 Although the bond that knit her soul with mine is
 broken?
 Why shouldest thou prove stronger?
 Short are the days of love, and wouldst thou make
 them longer?

Lili! in vain I shun thee!
 Thy spell is still upon me.
 In vain I wander through the distant forests strange,
 In vain I roam at will
 By foreign glade and hill,
 For, ah! where'er I range,
 Beside my heart, the heart of Lili nestles still!

10

Like a bird that breaks its twine,
 Is this poor heart of mine:
 It fain into the summer bowers would fly,
 And yet it cannot be
 Again so wholly free;
 For always it must bear
 The token which is there,
 To mark it as a thrall of past captivity.

20

SORROW WITHOUT CONSOLATION

[*Blackwood's Magazine*, February 1845]

O. WHEREFORE shouldst thou try
 The tears of love to dry?
 Nay, let them flow!
 For didst thou only know,
 How barren and how dead
 Seems everything below,
 To those who have not tears enough to shed,
 Thou'dst rather bid them weep, and seek their
 comfort so.

EARLY SPRING

Come ye so early,
 Days of delight?
 Making the hill-side
 Blithesome and bright?

Merrily, merrily,
 Little brooks rush,
 Down by the meadow,
 Under the bush.

Welkin and hill-top,
 Azure and cool;
 Fishes are sporting
 In streamlet and pool.

10

Birds of gay feather
 Flit through the grove,
 Singing together,
 Ditties of love.

Busily coming
 From moss-cover'd bowers,
 Brown bees are humming,
 Questing for flowers.

20

Lightsome emotion,
 Life everywhere;
 Faint wafts of fragrance
 Scenting the air.

Now comes there sounding
 A sough of the breeze,
 Shakes through the thicket,
 Sinks in the trees.

Sinks, but returning,
 It ruffles my hair;
 Aid me this rapture,
 Muses, to bear!

30

Know ye the passion
That stirs in me here?
Yestre'en at gloaming
Was I with my dear!

36

LONGING

WHAT stirs in my heart so?
What lures me from home?
What forces me outwards,
And onwards to roam?
Far up on the mountains
Lie cloudlets like snow;
O were I but yonder,
'Tis there I must go!

Now by come the ravens
So solemn and black;
I mingle among them,
And follow their track:
By rock and by turret
We silently glide;
Ah, there is the bower, where
My lady doth bide!

10

She walks in the greenwood,
That beautiful may;
Like a bird, singing clearly,
I drop on the spray.
She lists, and she lingers,
And softly says she—
'How sweetly it singeth,
It singeth for me!'

20

The sunset is gilding
The peaks of the hill,
The day is declining,
Yet tarries she still:
She follows the brooklet
Through meadow and glade,
Till dark is the pathway,
And lost in the shade.

30

Then, then I come down, as
A swift-shooting star;
'What light glimmers yonder,
So near yet so far?'
Ere yet the amazement
Hath pass'd from thee, sweet,
My quest it is ended,
I lie at thy feet!

40

TRANSLATIONS FROM THE LATIN ANTHOLOGY

[*Blackwood's Magazine*, April, 1838]

ILIA'S DREAM

THEN startled from her sleep, she spoke, all tears and
deeply moved—
‘My sister—my Eurydice, whom most our father loved!
O listen! for I feel as though no life were in my frame—
Methought while dreaming that a man, a graceful Being
came,
And bore me onward through the banks where pleasant
willows grew,
Then left me, and I seemed alone in places strange and
new:
I sought for thee, my sister, I sought thee far and near,
And yet no path my feet could find—my heart was full
of fear;
And then I heard our father's voice—these were his
words to me—
“O daughter, there is wretchedness and toil in store for
thee,
Ere Fortune from the River rise, then shalt thou be¹⁰
released.”
These, sister, were my father's words, and suddenly he
ceased.
Nor did his stately form appear to greet my longing
eyes;
Though eagerly I stretched my hands to the temples of
the skies;
Nor did I cease to weep aloud, and earnestly implore,
Until my sleep departed—and, oh! my heart was sore!’

ANDROMACHE'S LAMENT

WHITHER shall I flee for refuge? whither shall I look
for aid?
Flight or exile, which is safer? tower and town are
both betrayed;
Whom shall I implore for succour? our old altars are
no more,
Broken, crushed they lie, and splintered, and the flames
above them rear.

And our walls all blackened stand—O my father! father-land!
 O thou haughty house of Priam—temple with the gates surrounded
 I have seen thee—all thy splendour, all thy eastern pomp unbounded—
 All thy roofs and painted ceilings, all the treasures they contain,
 I have seen them—seen them blazing—I have seen old Priam slain,
 Foully murdered, and the altar of the Highest bears the stain.

10

TARQUIN'S DREAM

WHEN repose had come upon me and I yielded to its power,
 All my weary limbs composing, in the silent midnight hour;
 It appeared to me in slumber, that a shepherd drove along
 For my choice, it seemed, his hirsels, fair they were, and young, and strong.
 Two I marked that kindred seeming, most of all my fancy pleased,
 And the comeliest and fairest of the twaine, I straight-way seized;
 When behold, the other turning, aimed at me his armed brow,
 And so fiercely at me butted, that I fell beneath the blow.
 There while lying, sorely wounded, to the heaven I cast my eyes,
 And there saw I such an omen, as might well my soul surprise.
 For the sun's resplendent body seemed towards the east to tend,
 Leaving his accustomed orbit—what may such a sight portend?

10

Answer of the Interpreter.

Little need we wonder, monarch, if the thoughts our bosoms keep,
 If the deeds we fashion waking, should return to us in sleep.
 Yet not lightly may such visions in so great a thing be rated,
 Therefore, take thou heed lest any whom thou thought'st was fitly mated

With the dull and senseless many, be not wise, and
 good, and brave,
 Lest he drive thee from thy kingdom; for the sign that
 Phoebus gave,
 Shows some swift and sudden changing, something
 which shall see the light
 Well-portending for the people; since that Omen from
 the right ²⁰
 To the left its course pursuing, is a certain sign and sure.
 That the Roman state shall flourish, and beyond all
 states endure.

PROLOGUE OF LABERIUS

WHITHER hath Destiny (whose current strong
 Hath spared how few, how many swept along)
 Flung me, her victim, in my latter days,
 Whom not ambition, nor the meed of praise,
 Nor fear, nor power, nor frowns, nor aught beside,
 Could move, when youthful, from my place of pride?
 Lo! in mine age how easily I fall!
 One honeyed speech from Caesar's tongue was all.
 For how might I refuse his sovereign will,
 Whose every wish the Gods themselves fulfil? 10

Twice thirty years passed by without a scorn—
 A Roman knight I left my home this morn,
 And thither I return—as what? a Mime!
 O, I have lived one day beyond my time—
 Fortune, unequal both in good and ill,
 If thou hadst power, by this unhappy skill,
 To tear the wreath of honour from my brow,
 Why was I not far earlier taught to bow,
 When with such aid as youth and strength afford,
 I might have won the crowd, and pleased their lord?
 Now, why thus humbled? Where's the form and face,
 The mien majestic, and the gallant grace— ²²
 The fire of soul, the harmony of tone,
 That can adorn the mimic scene alone?
 As the slow ivy kills the stately tree,
 So age in its embrace is stifling me;
 And nothing's left of all my former fame
 Save the poor legend of a tomb—my name.

DE AMORE ET SPINIS

THERE was a garden fenced with glowing flowers,
 Its queen's delight, and had we seen it, ours;
 And once as Amor culled, when wandering there,
 The richest chaplet for his flowing hair,

His hand was wounded by a hidden thorn.
 Soon as he felt his tender fingers torn,
 And saw the bloody hand, away he flies,
 The large tear starting in his lovely eyes,
 And to his mother thus he made his moan,—
 'Whence have the roses, mother, hurtful grown? 10
 Why bear thy flowers a sting? They are my foes—
 One colour hath the blood and one the rose.'

THE STORY OF ORPHEUS

'Tis said the music of the Thracian bard
 Had power to make the savage creatures tame;
 Streams ceased to flow—birds heard him—and they
 came—
 And even rocks were moved, though dull and hard.
 Ay, and the trees by that sweet symphony
 Were brought to crown him with their pleasant shade.
 'Tis a kind fable by the poets made,
 For nothing senseless thus inspired could be:
 Yet did this Orpheus by his gentle phrase,
 Softened and soothed the world's primeval race; 10
 Won them from savage life to milder ways,
 And taught them justice, dignity, and grace;
 Made each unite him with his fellow men,
 And changed the savage to the citizen.

OVID'S SPRING-TIME

(from the *Tristia*)

[*Blackwood's Magazine*, May 1850]

For once the zephyrs have removed the cold:
 One year is over, and a new begun.
 So short a winter, I am daily told,
 Never yet yielded to this northern sun.
 I see the children skipping o'er the green,
 Plucking the faint unodorous violet,
 A gentle stranger, rarely ever seen.
 With other flowers the mead is sparsely set—
 Brown birds are twittering with the joy of spring:
 The universal swallow, ne'er at rest, 10
 Aye chirping, glances past on purple wing,
 And builds beneath the humble eaves her nest.
 The plant, which yester-year the share o'erthrew,
 Looks up again from out the opening mould;
 And the poor vines, though here but weak and few,
 Some scantling buds, like ill-set gems, unfold.

BALLADS FROM THE ROMAIC

[Blackwood's Magazine, May 1840]

II

[For No. I see page 180 *ante*]

THE VOICE FROM THE TOMB

Σάββατον ὅλον πίναμε, τὴν κυριαχ' ὅλ' ἡμέρα.

Two days we held our festival—two days we feasted
high;

And on the third our wine was done—both cask and
cup were dry.

The captain sent me forth alone to seek a fresh
supply;

But nothing of the way I knew, for stranger there
was I.

I took the first frequented path: it brought me to
a cave—

Another led me through the wood—another to the
wave;

At last I reach'd a rising ground, where many
a cluster'd grave

Mark'd, with its cross and figured stone, the dwelling
of the brave.

One stood apart from all the rest—one low and
lonely bed;

I saw it not, but, wandering on, I stepp'd upon its
head;

And lo! I heard a voice beneath—a voice as from¹⁰
the dead,

Like thunder subterranean, in answer to my tread.

'What hast thou there, O lonely tomb?—what cause
disturbs thy rest?

The black earth heap'd too heavily—the stone upon
thy breast?'

'I am not wearied with the stone, nor by the mould
oppress;

It is thine own unhallow'd step that wakes me from
my rest!

'Remove thy foot from off my head, thou stranger
of the night,

And trouble not the sleep of him who fought his
country's fight;

For I have been a young man too, in glory and in
might,

And wander'd on the mountain side when the moon
was shining bright.'

III

LOVE'S WITNESS

Κόρη, ὄντας φιλόμαστον, νύκτα ἦτον, ποῖος μᾶς εἶδε;

‘WHEN I was in thy chamber,
Alone, my love, with thee,
Night cast its shadow round us,
And none was there to see;
The very breeze was lying
Asleep within the tree;
Then who could tell, or who reveal,
This cruel tale of me?’

‘The lady moon was peeping,
And watch’d us through the tree;
A little star shot downwards,
And told it to the sea;
A sailor caught the whisper,
Who bore no love to me,
And sang, before a maiden’s door,
This wicked tale of thee.’

10

IV

IOTIS DYING

Σηκόνομαι πολὺ ταχυνά, δὺ’ ὥραις ὕσον νὰ φέξῃ.

Two hours before the dawning, while yet the night-stars gleam,

I wake me from my slumber, and plunge into the stream;

I look around and listen—the morning watch is mine—
I hear the beeches rustle, I hear the murmuring pine.

My comrades lie around me; but yet they do not sleep.

They call upon their captain—they call him and they weep;

‘Up, up, Iotis! rouse thee—to battle with thy best!
The enemy are on us!—up, up, we may not rest!’

‘What shall I say, my children?—how answer to your call?

This wound of mine is mortal; deep struck the deadly ball;

‘Tis burning in my bosom—ye summon me in vain:
O! never in the combat my sword shall flash again!

10

'Your hands, my brave ones! raise me—once more
erect I stand,

Once more ye gather round me, my true and trusty
band!

Sounds not my voice as clearly as in the battle cry?
Then bring me wine, bright sparkling, that I may
drink and die!

'O! were I on the mountains—the mountains wild
and free!

Beside the upland forest, beneath the spreading tree;
To feel the breezes blowing, to hear the wild-bird's
song,

And sheep-bells, gaily jingling, as the white flock
moves along!

20

THE HYMN OF KING OLAF THE SAINT

ALTERED FROM THE ICELANDIC

[*Blackwood's Magazine*, June 1847]

SWEND, king of all,

In Olaf's hall

Now sits in state on high;

Whilst up in heaven

Amidst the shriven

Sits Olaf's majesty.

For not in cell

Does our hero dwell,

But in realms of light for ever:

As a ransom'd saint

To heal our plaint,

Be glory to thee, gold-giver!

10

Of raptures there

He has won his share,

All cleansed from taint of sin;

For on earth prepared,

No toil he spared

That holy place to win.

That he hath won

Near God's dear Son

Fast by the holy river—

Oh, such as thine

May the end be mine;

Be glory to thee, gold-giver!

20

His sacred form
 Unscathed by worm,
 And clear as the hour he died,
 Lies at this day
 Where good men pray
 At morn and at eventide. 30
 His nails and his hair
 Are fresh and fair,
 With his yellow locks still growing;
 His cheek as red,
 And his flesh not dead,
 Though the blood hath ceased from flowing.
 If you watch by night,
 In the dim twilight
 You may hear a requiem singing;
 And the people hear 40
 Above his bier
 A small bell clearly ringing.
 And if ye wait
 Until midnight late,
 You may hear the great bell toll:
 But none can tell
 Who tolls that bell
 If it sounds for Olaf's soul.
 With tapers clear,
 Which Christ holds dear, 50
 O'er the corpse so still reclining,
 By day and night
 Is the altar light
 And the cross of the Saviour shining.
 For our King did so,
 And all men know
 That washed from sin and shriven,
 All free from taint,
 A ransom'd saint,
 He dwells with the saints in heaven. 60
 And thousands come,
 The deaf and the dumb,
 To the tomb of our monarch here—
 The sick and the blind
 Of every kind
 They throng to the holy bier.
 With heads all bare
 They breathe their prayer
 As they kneel on the flinty ground:
 God hears their sighs, 70
 And the sick men rise
 All whole, and healed, and sound.

Then to Olaf pray,
 To spare thy day
 From wrath, and wrong, and harm;
 To save thy land
 From the spoiler's hand,
 And the fell invader's arm.
 God's man is he,
 To deal to thee 80
 What is asked in a lowly spirit—
 Let thy prayer not cease,
 And wealth, and peace,
 And a blessing thou shalt inherit.
 For prayers are good,
 If before the rood
 Thy beads thou tellest praying;
 If thou tellest on,
 Forgetting none
 Of the saints who with God are staying. 90

THE ELF-STROKE

(From the Danish.¹)[From the notes to *Poems and Ballads of Goethe*, 1859]

SIR OLUF has ridden far and wide,
 The folk to his wedding-feast to bid.
 The elves they dance in the fairy ring,
 And the Elf-King's daughter, she beckons to him.
 'Now welcome, Sir Oluf, tarry a wee!
 Step into the ring and dance with me.'
 'I must not dance, and I dare not stay,
 To-morrow it is my wedding-day.'
 'Light down, Sir Oluf, and dance with me,
 And two gold spurs I will give to thee: 10
 'A sark, too, of silk, so white and fine,
 My mother bleach'd it in pale moonshine.'
 'I must not dance, I dare not stay,
 To-morrow it is my wedding-day.'
 'Light down, Sir Oluf, and dance with me,
 And a heap of gold I'll give to thee.'

¹ The old Norse ballad, which is to be found in the *Danske Viser*, is entitled 'Elveskud', or 'The Elf-stroke', and the following is a very close translation of it, with the omission of the two last stanzas, and also of a *refrain*, which was commonly used by the professional reciters both of Denmark and Scotland.

'O well I like the golden glance,
But not for that with thee I'll dance.'

'An' if thou wilt not dance with me,
A bane and a blight shall follow thee.'

20

She struck him a blow right over the heart,
It chill'd him through with a wondrous smart.

Pale grew his cheek as he turn'd to ride;
'Now get thee home to thy winsome bride!'

And when to his castle door he sped,
Her mother stood waiting all a-dread.

'Now tell to me, Sir Oluf, my son,
What makes thy cheek so pale and wan?'

'O well may it be wan and pale,
I've seen the elf-folk in the vale!'

30

'Alas for thee, my son, my pride!
What shall I say to thy bonny bride?'

'Tell her that I'm to the forest bound,
To prove my horse and my good grey hound.'

Right early, or ever the day had broke,
The bride she came with the bridal folk.

They dealt out meat, and they dealt out wine;
'Now where is Sir Oluf, this groom of mine?'

'Sir Oluf has gone to the forest bound,
To prove his steed and his good grey hound.'

40

The bride she lifted the mantle red,
There lay Sir Oluf, and he was dead.

BALLADS, FROM THE GERMAN OF LUDWIG UHLAND

THE MINSTREL'S CURSE

[*Blackwood's Magazine*, March 1836]

So loftily in olden times a royal castle stood,
Wide looked it o'er a landscape of hill, and plain, and
flood;
And round it lay a garden, a bright and flowery ring,
Where flashed in rainbow splendour the gush of many
a spring.

There dwelt a haughty monarch who ruled o'er far
 and near,
 So pale he sate upon his throne, so gloomy was his
 cheer;
 And what he thinks is terror, and what he looks is
 wrath—
 And what he speaks is cruelty, and what he writes
 is death. 8

Once came there to the castle a noble minstrel pair
 The one with golden ringlets, the other gray of hair;
 The old man bore his cherished harp, and gaily did
 he ride,
 And his young and gallant comrade went ever by his
 side.

Then spake the aged minstrel—'Now be prepared, my
 son,
 Think o'er our choicest melodies—collect thy deepest
 tone—
 Thy mirthful and thy passion'd lays be ready thou to
 sing,
 For all we need to soften the heart of yonder king.'

And soon within the pillar'd hall the minstrels both
 were seen,
 Where sate the throned monarch, and by his side the
 queen;
 The monarch fearfully arrayed, like the blood-red
 Northern glare,
 The lady like the glorious moon, so gentle and so
 fair! 20

The old man touch'd his favourite harp, he touch'd it
 wondrous well,
 That richer, ever richer rose the music's kindling
 swell;
 Then poured with heavenly clearness the young man's
 strain along,
 Betwixt his master's melody, like a happy spirit's song.

They sang of spring, they sang of love, of the golden
 days of youth,
 Of freedom and immortal deeds, of virtue and of truth;
 They sang of every tender thought that makes the
 bosom thrill,
 They sang of every lofty deed which makes it loftier
 still.

The courtiers ceased from jesting—their hearts were
 overawed—
 The warriors of the monarch they bowed themselves
 to God;
 The queen, in love and transport, more melted than³⁰
 the rest,
 Threw down unto the minstrel the rose from out her
 breast.

‘Ye have misled my people, and dare ye shame my
 queen!’
 The king cried out in anger, he stepped in wrath
 between;
 He plunged his weapon, lightning-swift, into the young
 man’s side,
 And marr’d the gush of golden song in nature’s
 ruddiest tide.

The courtier crowd are scattered in terror and alarm—
 The youth hath fallen senseless into his master’s arm,
 Who wrapp’d his mantle round him, and placed him
 on his steed,
 And bound the body upright, and left the place with
 speed.⁴⁰

But by the lofty portal, there stopped the minstrel
 gray.
 There seized he on his harp which bore the prize
 from all away;
 And ’gainst a marble pillar that jewel hath he flung,
 And spoke, till with his prophet voice the hall and
 garden rung—

‘Wo to thee, haughty palace! O never may the strain
 Of harp, or lute, or melody be raised in thee again!
 No! only may the step of slaves, the sigh and bitter
 groan,
 Be heard till the avenging sprite hath torn thee stone
 from stone.

‘Wo to ye, airy gardens, in the glorious light of May!
 To you this bleeding corpse, this sight of ruin I
 display;
 That a spell may come upon ye, that your fountains⁵⁰
 may abate,
 And that for ever ye may lie destroyed and desolate!

‘Wo to thee, wicked murderer! To bards a curse and
 shame—
 In vain be all thy strivings for a bloody wreath of
 fame:

Forgotten be thy very name—forgotten and for aye,
Lost utterly in empty air, like a wretch's latest sigh!

The old man hath proclaimed it, and heaven hath
heard his call;

Low lies the haughty palace, and ruin'd is the hall;
And but one pillar standeth yet of all its perished
might,

And that, already cleft in twain, may fall before the
night. 60

And round, instead of gardens, is a dry and barren
land;

No tree gives shade or shelter, no fountain slakes the
sand;

No song, no roll of chivalry, that monarch's name
rehearse,

Unnoticed—unremembered—that is the Minstrel's
Curse!

THE CASTLE BY THE SEA

[*Blackwood's Magazine*, March 1836]

SAY, hast thou seen the castle,
Which stands above the sea;
O'er which, in bright and golden flight,
The clouds are floating free?

And is it fairly mirror'd
In the crystal flood below?
And does its shadow tremble
In the evening's ruddy glow?

I saw that lofty castle
Above the dark profound; 10
And the cold moon stood above it,
And night-mists floated round.

Spoke not the wind and ocean
With merry voice and strong?
And heard'st thou not the sound within,
Of lute, and harp, and song?

The winds and waves were lying
In silence one and all;
And a funeral hymn was singing
Within the darksome hall. 20

And saw'st thou passing by thee
The monarch and his queen—
The royal robes of purple,
The sceptre's golden sheen?

And led they not between them
 A maiden young and fair,
 All sunlike in her loveliness,
 With bright and flowing hair?

Without or crown or purple
 I saw the royal pair;
 Their robes were robes of mourning, 30
 The maiden was not there!

THE COUNT OF GREIERS

[*Blackwood's Magazine*, March 1836.]

THE gallant Count of Greiers—he looked at break of
 day,
 From the doorway of his castle to where the mountains
 lay,
 He saw their peaks all kindled in the morning's ruddy
 sheen,
 And in a doubtful twilight lay the Alpine vales
 between.

'O Alps! eternal mountains! how long I to be there;
 O happy are your children, the herd and cottage fair;
 Oft have I looked upon you with bosom all at rest,
 But now a longing like a love is kindling in my
 breast.'

And near and nearer opens sweet music on his ear,
 The shepherd and the shepherdess, they come the 10
 castle near,
 And on the lofty terraces they form a circling ring,
 And there white arms are glancing, and garlands
 fluttering.

The youngest village maidens—so fair and young were
 they!—
 They took the noble by the hand, he must with them
 away;
 And round him wound the circle, till in the midst
 was he:
 'Ha! gallant Count of Greiers, our prisoner must thou
 be!'

They bore him from the castle with dance, and laugh,
 and song,
 They danced throughout the villages and through the
 village throng,

They danced across the meadows, they danced through
wood and spray,
Until far up within the Alps the music died away.

Dawned hath the second morning, the third is coming
on—

Why stays the Count of Greiers, where hath the²¹
gallant gone?

Lo! downwards unto evening the sultry sun has past,
It thunders in the mountains, the lightning flashes
fast.

The vaults of heaven are opened, the stream is raging
white.

And as the jagged lightning lays bare the breast of
night,

A man is in the whirlpool seen, who strives with
might and main,

Until a branch he seizes, and reaches shore again.

'Here am I, from the bosom of the mountains swept
along!

The deadly storm descended midst mirth, and dance,
and song;

Ye all are hid, my comrades, in hut and rocky cave,³⁰
I—only I—was borne away by yon devouring wave.

'Farewell, ye verdant mountains, with all your happy
crew!

Farewell, ye three most blessed days, when a shepherd's
life I knew!

O never, never was I born to dwell in such a heaven,
As that from which with lightning wrath and anger
I am driven.

'Rest thou, O fairest Alpine rose, unsullied by my
hand!

I feel—the chilling torrent, it quenches not this brand!
No more amidst that witching band, no more with
thee I roam.

Take me into thy loneliness, thou old and empty
home!'

43

THE STUDENT

[*Blackwood's Magazine*, May 1836.]

As by Salamanca's city,
Once I sate within the vale;
And while birds were round me singing,
Read in Homer's master tale,

How in gay and rich apparel,
 Helen mounted Ilion's wall;
 And so wond'rous seemed her beauty
 To the Trojan elders all,

That each greybeard to his neighbour
 Muttered, gazing on her face:
 'Trust me, never was there woman
 Seen so fair of earthly race!' 10

And I deeper read and deeper,
 Marking nought that passed around,
 Till the leaves beside me rustled,
 Then I started at the sound.

On a neighbouring balcony,
 What a wonder there I saw!
 There in gay and rich apparel
 Stood a maid like Helena. 20

And an old man was beside her,
 With so strange, yet kind a mien;
 That I could have sworn—the elder
 Had of Priam's counsel been.

Then I was a bold Achaian,
 For from that remember'd day,
 Ever near the haunted dwelling,
 Like another Troy, I lay.

Simply to relate my story—
 Many a week of summer long,
 Came I every evening thither,
 With my lute and with my song; 30

Told in many a mournful ditty
 All my love and all my pain,
 Till from out the lofty lattice
 Came a sweet response again.

Thus exchanging word and music
 Passed we half the fleeting year—
 Even this was only granted
 While the dotard did not hear. 40

Often from his couch he wandered
 Restless, jealous, and awake;
 But unheard by him our voices,
 As the songs the planets make.

But at last—the night was fearful,
 Starless, gloomy as the grave—
 To my well-accustomed signal
 No response the loved one gave;

Only one old toothless lady
 Heard me evermore complain— 50
 Only that old maiden, Echo,
 Sent me back my call again.

Vanished was my love—my beauty;
 Empty chamber, room, and hall;
 Empty was the blooming garden—
 Cold and desolate were all!

Ah! and ne'er had I discover'd
 Where her home, or what her name;
 For by word and sign she threaten'd
 Never to disclose the same. 60

Then I went about to seek her,
 Far and near, my lot to try;
 Homer's tale I left behind me,
 For Ulysses' self was I!

But I took my lute to guide me,
 And beside each castle door,
 Under every lattice window,
 Made I music as before;

Sang the strain in field and city
 Which, in Salamanca's grove, 70
 Every evening I had chanted
 As a signal to my love;

But the hoped-for, longed-for answer
 Came not back to bless my ear,
 Only that old lady, Echo,
 Travelled with me, ever near.

MIDNIGHT MUSIC

[*Blackwood's Magazine*, May 1836]

'WHAT wakes me from my heavy sleep
 With tones so low and sweet?
 O mother, see, who can it be
 So late within the street?'—

'I hear no sound—I see no form,
 O slumber soft and mild!
 No midnight music comes for thee,
 My poor and sickly child.'

'It was no music of the earth
 That sounded in mine ear;
 The angels call me with their songs: 10
 Good night, O mother dear!'

THE DREAM

[*Blackwood's Magazine*, May 1836]

IN fairest garden wandered
 Two lovers hand in hand :
 Two pale and phantom beings,
 They sate in a flowery land.
 On the cheek they kissed each other,
 They kissed with mouth to mouth ;
 They lay in close embraces,
 They were fair and full of youth.
 Two dismal bells were pealing,
 The dream had passed away—
 She in her convent chamber,
 He in a dungeon lay.

10

DURAND

[*Blackwood's Magazine*, May 1836]

To the ancient house of Balbi,
 With a bosom music-swelling,
 Came Durand, the gallant minstrel ;
 Soon he nears the lofty dwelling.
 There a fair and youthful maiden
 To his harp will fondly listen,
 And her cheeks will glow with crimson,
 And her eyes will fill and glisten.
 Underneath the Linden's shadow,
 Now his greeting softly ringeth,
 With a full-toned voice, the sweetest
 Of his many lays he singeth.
 From the lattice—from the window,
 Blossoms wave to greet the lover,
 But the mistress of his music
 Nowhere can the youth discover.
 And a man came out to meet him—
 Sad he looked and heavy-hearted,—
 'Trouble not the dead who slumber,
 Lady Bianca hath departed !'
 But Durand, the gallant minstrel,
 Hath no word in answer spoken.
 Closed are his eyes for ever,
 And his noble heart is broken !
 In the distant cloister chapel,
 Where the lovely corpse reposes,
 Torches all around her burning,
 And her body strewed with roses.

10

20

Fear and wonder, hope and trembling,
 All the crowd of mourners seizeth, 30
 When, the darksome bier forsaking,
 Lady Bianca slowly riseth.

From the gloomy trance awaking,
 In her beauty hath she risen,
 Like a blushing bride she cometh,
 Shrouded from her narrow prison,

Still of what had passed unconscious,
 Still, as if by dreams surrounded,
 Asks she gently—'Young Durand—
 Hath not here his music sounded?' 40

Yes, indeed, 'twas his that sounded,
 But that song is past and spoken;
 He hath broke thy death-like slumber,
 His shall never more be broken!

To the house of saints and angels,
 Hath he gone to seek the lady,
 Seek his own beloved maiden,
 Who he deemed was there already.

All the bright and glorious mansions
 To his heedless glance are given— 50
 Bianca! Bianca! calls he ever,
 Through the empty halls of Heaven.

[Type-facsimile of title-page]

P O L A N D,

H O M E R,

A N D O T H E R P O E M S.

DULCE ET DECORUM EST PRO PATRIA MORI!

L O N D O N :

L O N G M A N , R E E S , O R M E , B R O W N , G R E E N , & L O N G M .

A N D A D A M B L A C K , E D I N B U R G H .

1832

PRINCE ADAM CZARTORYSKI,

AND

THE POLISH EXILES,

THIS VOLUME

IS INSCRIBED,

WITH THAT DEEP RESPECT

WHICH THEIR SUFFERINGS IN THE CAUSE

OF FREEDOM AND THEIR COUNTRY

DEMAND,

BY

THE AUTHOR.

POLAND

SPIRIT of Freedom, shadow of the God
 Whom nations worship when he walks abroad ;
 Shadow, yet light, to which we turn our eyes,
 When chafed by wrongs or smote by miseries ;
 Guardian of truth, without whose aid our life
 Would be a warfare of eternal strife—
 Where hast thou hid thy face and veil'd thy brow ?
 The hearts of men are searching for thee now.
 Lo ! from its watch a glorious star is driven,
 There is a comet wand'ring through thy heaven ; 10
 There is a plague upon the shrinking earth,
 That threatens thy reign with pestilence and dearth—
 A deep and dark conspiracy of sin
 Has ring'd and hemm'd thy ancient castle in.
 We seek, but know not whither thou hast fled—
 Come, ere the living shrink into the dead—
 Come, ere the tyrant and his brother slave
 Have rear'd their ghastly trophies o'er the brave
 Who fought and fell on Poland's bloodiest day,
 The martyrs in the last Thermopylae ! 20
 Let us not hear that cruel march again !
 Come, like an earthquake traversing the plain,
 That makes the hills resound, and cities shake ;
 O come, we pray thee, for thy children's sake,
 Rise ere another field is lost and won,
 Avenge us by a second Marathon !

O thou poor country ! 'twas a crime for thee
 Even to dream that freemen should be free ;
 It is a crime when weakness wars with might,
 Or dares impeach its law that power is right ; 30
 It is a crime that ne'er can be forgiven,
 To break a tyrant's chain and side with Heaven :
 For this—for uttering loud thy just appeal—
 A hard and bitter penance dost thou feel.
 Ask not for justice here, for she hath gone
 To plead thy cause before a higher throne ;
 To show thy wrongs in characters of flame,
 Before that footstool whence her mission came.
 Speak not to men, they tamely see thee weep,
 For they are bribed, or heartless, or asleep, 40
 Or very fear hath bow'd their heads so low,
 That none dare look on such a giant foe !

Thou desolated widow! fold thy veil—
 There is no ear to hearken to thy tale;
 There is no refuge, no deserted shed,
 To screen from blasts, and furious storms, thy head—
 The wounded bird can flutter to its nest,
 But thou hast no such dwelling-place of rest;
 Thou hast no friend to bid thee to his hall,
 Thou hast no kinsman to avenge thy fall, 50
 The monarchs of the earth have past thee by,
 Nor deign'd to look upon thy misery.
 Go thou and weep upon thy children's grave,
 They died for thee, the beautiful and brave!
 Go thou and weep at early dawn of morn,
 Go thou and weep when glooming clouds are shorn
 Of their day radiance, and the evening star
 Above the dark blue mountains glimmers far—
 Go thou and weep—no planet of bright hope
 Hath the ascendant in thy horoscope— 60
 Hard fate hath fill'd for thee her greatest cup,
 And forced thee to the dregs to quaff it up;
 She hath no deadlier poison to bestow,
 Go thou and weep, thou need'st not fear thy foe!

O Europe! Europe! falsely named the wise,
 How could'st thou gaze on such a sacrifice?
 Well didst thou know the base and guilty wile,
 And yet thy lips were smiling all the while—
 Tell me, I pray you, was the sight so sweet,
 To view thy sister gasping at thy feet? 70
 Was it so very pleasant to thy heart,
 To see her blood upon thy garments start?
 Is that a stain so slight that in a day,
 Yea, in one age, it can be cleansed away?
 Is freedom then a thing so very weak,
 That thou wilt see it die, nor deign to speak?
 Is thy voice gone, or doth it only err,
 That it will flatter such a murderer?

Why hast thou slept in such a dreary trance,
 Is freedom not thine own, thou glorious France? 80
 Didst thou not draw for her the righteous sword,
 Was not her name thy only rallying word?
 Say, did she not within thy bosom burn,
 Like unquench'd ashes in a burial urn—
 Did she not riot there, until she leapt
 Like light on darkness—were the bonds not swept
 From off thy limbs—did not the tyrant's rod
 Fall from his grasp when thou didst walk abroad?
 Brandless and bright thou camest into the day,
 All purged and cleansed from an iron sway— 90

Strong as an Amazon, yet just and pure
 As those whose tales in lays of old endure.
 Ah! when she call'd, why didst thou not arise,
 Did none but thee deserve so rich a prize?
 Did not thy blood throughout thy pulses stir?
 Yes! thou hadst many a soul that worshipp'd her,
 As all should worship—many a heart was thine,
 That would have died to save so blest a shrine.
 Why wert thou patient then? Alas! Alas! 99
 Thou let'st the time, thou should'st have taken, pass;
 Thou should'st have risen, ere the blow was sped—
 To save the living, not avenge the dead.
 It is no fame to rear a trophied grave
 O'er her who pray'd for thee to help and save;
 No honour, but to give an empty word,
 To carve the epitaph, not draw the sword—
 The voice of him to whom thy crown is given
 Was fainter surely than the call of Heaven;
 Why did ye wait for one so cold and weak?
 There was no need to rest till he should speak. 110
 O gallant-hearted, yet unthinking men,
 Hope not to make that king a citizen!
 Where is the virtue lies within a name?
 Bourbon or Orleans, it is all the same—
 What firm reliance could ye place in one
 Who joins two parties, yet dare side with none?
 Viceroy to him, whose crimes have sent him forth,
 To seek a banish'd dwelling in the north—
 Sovereign of those whose hearts he cannot win,
 Sworn unto virtue, yet allied to sin— 120
 The umpire of a poor and petty throne—
 A felon, with the robes of justice on,
 Who prates of virtue, and eternal laws,
 Yet sneers at freedom and at freedom's cause:
 A Sylla of the north—a laurell'd slave—
 In words a patriot, and in deeds a knave!
 Thou poor, thou broken, thou despised thing!
 Thou voice, thou type, thou shadow of a king!
 Think'st thou the hands that tore the forfeit crown
 From off a tyrant's brow, will spare thine own? 130
 Think'st thou that France will see her sister bleed,
 Nor, though she could not ward, avenge the deed?
 Thou tame apostate! wouldst thou dare to bar
 The march of Freedom to her holy war?
 Deem'st thou thy borrow'd sceptre e'er was made
 To stop that bright, yet terrible crusade?
 Away! away! thou canst not read the heart,
 Thou hast no knowledge of her nobler part:
 The spell within the bosom of the free,
 Is a deep mystery—too deep for thee. 140

The hills, the dungeon, are to thee the same;
Back—back, and hide thy head for shame! for shame!

And thou, alas! where have thy terrors been,
Britain, my country, old and royal queen?
Thou, who hast drawn thy peerless sword so oft,
When the white flag of right was rear'd aloft;
Thou, unto whom the injured nations bow,
And bless the meteor justice of thy brow;
Thou haven, unto whom the merchant ships
Flee from the terrors of the dark eclipse; 150
Thou talisman, within whose charmed ring
Exists no evil—no accursed thing;
Thou tower of strength, which tempests ne'er can shake,
Thou slumbering giantess, awake! awake!
O! saw'st thou not the breach in Warsaw's wall?
O! heard'st thou not the warrior's battle call?
Leapt not thy lifeblood with indignant thrill,
Throbb'd not thy brain, and wilt thou yet be still?
Thy King is one whose very name alone
Hath rear'd within his subjects' hearts a throne. 160
Another Alfred, come to lead us back
Unto our ancient and deserted track;
To bring again those unforgotten days,
When virtue only won the meed of praise;
A lion-hearted prince, in whom we see
How bright beyond compare a crown may be,
When worn by him who never will disdain
His people's love to glorify his reign.
Nay, nay, thou wilt not sleep: this sacred spark
From Freedom's torch shall die not in the dark; 170
Be thou a refuge to the lost again,
Fling out thy battle like a cloud of rain,
Raise thy proud voice till quailing tyrants shrink,
And stand and tremble when they dare not think;
Be thou God's great and just avenger still,
And he will bless thee, as all nations will;
Be thou His scourge to drive this wolf away,
And break the fangs that marr'd that gallant prey.
Do this and prosper—Kings shall come to thee,
And do high homage on their bended knee; 180
The day will laugh upon thee with such smiles
As morning sheds upon the Cyclad isles;
Ne'er shalt thou feel the envious tread of time,
Unscared by treason, and unstain'd by crime;
Youth shall be thine, that hath no wintry age;
And thou shalt keep, within a woven cage,
Calm'd into boldness, Peace, that fearful dove;
Thou shalt have gift for gift, and love for love;

Mightiest among the mighty, thou shalt be
 The star of nightly worship to the free,
 And men of every clime, on every shore,
 Shall praise thee, bless thee, and almost adore!

190

But thou, Sarmatia! is there here below
 A thing so lost, so desolate as thou?
 Is there another heart that ever knew
 Such pangs as those that rive thy bosom through?
 Yes! there is one, who even now doth ride
 In all the splendour of despotic pride;
 He, who hath bid his dark familiars come
 To crown thee with the wreath of martyrdom;
 To whom the eastern hordes their tribute bring,
 And hail him tyrant, surely never king;
 Whose very name is like a noxious charm,
 Or evil omen, spoke to work thee harm;
 Whose aim hath been, ay, even from his birth,
 To rouse 'gainst Heaven, the blinded powers of earth;
 Within whose parch'd and fear-distemper'd brain,
 A nameless brand is stamp'd—the mark of Cain!
 How can *he* dare, that royal wretch, to sleep
 When victim nations raise their voice to weep?
 The fearful curse that God hath written down,
 The smoke from village, and from plunder'd town;
 The anguish'd moan, the irons' heavy sound
 Within the dungeon, far beneath the ground,
 Where the young patriot, born amongst the hills,
 Draws the damp breath, which poisons ere it kills;
 Guilt, with its serpent eye, and frantic Fear,
 Raving of murder where no hand is near;
 These are the dreams that flit around his head,
 These are the chamberlains that guard his bed.

200

210

220

Shall he escape a curse? O, do not speak—
 For all that man could say were idly weak;
 Within that heart of his more tortures live,
 More galling stings, than words of fear could give;
 Leave him alone, and let the silence roll,
 That worst of terrors to a guilty soul;
 For ever round him—let him hear the voice
 Of EVIL whisper closely—'Come—rejoice!
 Man, thou hast gain'd for us what we alone
 Have striven to do, and yet have left undone.
 Thanks for thy help—such thanks as we can give,
 Live, till thou know'st how sweet it is to live;
 Take thou no thought of what thou hast to dread,
 Leave thou repentance for thy dying bed;
 Then shalt thou feel how easy 'tis to bear
 That which thou callest horror or despair;

230

Then wilt thou pray for life—but wherefore pray?
 Thou canst not keep the night from following day.
 The best and wisest of the human race
 Have deem'd the grave a calm and quiet place; 240
 Does not thy heart respond that it is so?
 Say, thou pale tyrant, darest thou answer—no?
 Darest thou believe there is a God on high,
 Yet hope to shun his pure and searching eye?
 Thou worse than atheist! there are some so blind,
 Who think that death has nothing left behind;
 That all alike, the wicked and the just,
 Fret their short hour, then mingle with the dust;
 Dragg'd from their joy, and rescued from their pain,
 To lie for ever there, nor wake again. 250
 Take that unto thee for a saving faith,
 Believe there is no judgment after death;
 Strive, if thou wilt, to ruin and remove
 All that is left us here of hope or love;
 Press on to riot in the pride of guilt,
 And laugh to see the blood of nations spilt;
 For, if thou joinest men of holier creed,
 Past all redemption thou art damn'd indeed!

There was a time, ere tyranny begun,
 When nations would not quail or bend to one, 260
 Who thought a monarch too despised a thing,
 And fain would make a despot of a king—
 Insulted right and banish'd freedom then
 Could find a friend in honourable men.
 Brutus and Cato! yours are names that live
 In that eternity which fame can give;
 Glorious your deaths, nor have you died in vain,
 Though now the chain you burst is link'd again;
 If tyrants thus neglect the fate, which crime
 Has brought their brethren in the olden time, 270
 Let them but look a moment's space on him
 Whose breath now makes the light of freedom dim,
 Let them but see the certain prize of woe
 Which guilt, to such as him, must still bestow,
 Then, if they dare to gaze with steadfast eye,
 On such a ghastly vision—let them die!

Lo! where he sleeps—can such as he repose—
 How doth a tyrant dare his eyelids close?
 To guileless hearts sleep is a blessed thing,
 But to the guilty 'tis a piercing sting! 280
 Is this like rest, this hot and hurried chase
 Of fearful thoughts that anguish in his face?
 Of palsied visions, and of dreams that swarm
 Around the brain, with power to strike and harm?

O! what a soul is that, which flies for bliss,
 Nay, for a refuge, to repose like this—
 What are his waking thoughts, whose fancy teems
 In sleep with torture—Would you know his dreams?

They led him back, by their mysterious spell,
 To scenes his heart remember'd but too well; 290
 They show'd him what his conscience strove to hide
 Even from himself, and all the world beside;
 They pierced for him the bosom of the grave,
 They raised the phantoms of the good and brave,
 They purged the dimness from his eyes away,
 And bade him count his deeds, then dare to pray.

He stood as if upon a mountain side,
 Above a low fair country; far and wide
 The fields were waving in the morning sun,
 The happy time of harvest had begun; 300
 The reaper plied him gaily at his toil,
 And through the valleys rang a glad turmoil
 Of merry voices; every heart was blest,
 For labour was a pleasure after rest.
 The earth, so kindred to the quiet skies,
 Bloom'd like a little perfect paradise;
 The lake lay waveless, and the rivers ran,
 Leaping and singing, like a careless man,
 Right through the bosom of the cloven woods,
 And made a murmur in their solitudes, 310
 That won the silence from the leafy shade—
 Alas! that happiness like this must fade!

Far in the distance dim, there grew a mist
 Like vapour by the morning glimpses kist;
 At first a tiny thing; it rose and spread
 Nearer, and nearer, till it gathered
 Substance and form; athwart the sky it came:
 Is it the smoke of some devouring flame?
 The peasants gazed in silence. Then faint sounds
 Came indistinctly from the forest bounds— 320
 A bugle note—sometimes a startled cry,
 As of a man in sudden jeopardy—
 Then louder—fiercer—Ha! 'tis coming near—
 At times the vivid glancing of a spear
 Sprang in the wood. A loud and pealing drum
 Beat to the charge. Fly! fly! your murderers come.
 They burst upon the plain. A sable steed
 Bore him who seem'd that furious band to lead.
 The dreamer started. Fast the Cossack came,
 His long lance beaming like a burning flame, 330
 That must be quench'd—in what? In guiltless blood!
 And quench'd it was; for, where the reapers stood

They met the charge; and when the charge was done,
 On bleeding corpses look'd the blushing sun;
 A brand was cast among the half-sheaved corn,
 It caught, it kindled, and the bugle horn
 Rang in the distance, till a shrilling yell
 From the far village waken'd, like a spell,
 The mountain echo; shriek on shriek arose,
 Blent in strange contrast with the shouts of foes 340
 In horrid triumph—faint they grew, then died,
 For death is silent. This is kingly pride!
 What price for this, thou sleeper, shalt thou pay?
 It ended, and that vision pass'd away.

Another came. It was a gloomy cell,
 Where, through cross'd bars, the feeble glimpses fell
 Against the wall, where hung a broken chain,
 Whose rusted links gave back no light again.
 It seem'd as if for years no human face
 Had come to shudder at so drear a place, 350
 Where nothing, save the roof-drop's fretting sound,
 Intruded on the lifelessness profound.
 There, in a corner, where a rotting bed
 Of straw was flung, a naked corpse was spread;
 'Tis he, the ruthless wretch! whose envious feet
 Trampled on virtue in her holiest seat;
 Who brought the storm of war to cloud the sky,
 Whose very brightness pain'd his jealousy.
 A flaxen cord was twisted round his neck;
 Upon his blue lips lay a crimson speck; 360
 His eyes were starting underneath the brow,
 Bent with the scowl of hatred even now;
 His hands were clench'd, as in the frantic strife
 They griped and struggled hard, for life—for life!
 Convulsed his limbs. Ay, sleeper! strive to scream—
 Is there not ghastly truth within a dream?
 Know'st thou that face? Well may the tortured sweat
 Stream on thy brow, thou dost remember it!
 How can a brother e'er forget a brother?
 You were the children of the self-same mother; 370
 You both have sat upon one nurse's knee,
 And clasp'd each other's necks with infant glee;
 And now—nay! wherefore turn, and strive to hide
 Thy countenance?—thou art a fratricide!
 Blush not at that, it is thy noblest deed,
 There was no fitter sacrifice to bleed;
 A better service in a better cause,
 Was never done to earth's insulted laws,
 And homeless thousands will for once combine,
 To thank, if not to praise, an act of thine— 380

O thou most stern avenger!—ancient times
 Have known dark virtues nearly link'd to crimes;
 A father then—a pure and virtuous one—
 Hath raised the axe to slay a traitor son;
 But *thou*—no other heart, save thine, can know
 What made thee strike so merciful a blow;
 It were no sin, if justice only sped
 Her hallow'd vengeance at the felon's head;
 Her deeds are pure, her mission is divine,
 But sin has gain'd much empire over thine.
 'Tis a strange law, or else we greatly err,
 For murderer to slay a murderer:
 Blood cannot wash away a bloody stain,
 And deeper marks of slaughter must remain.
 If to thyself thou seemest guiltless, then
 None dare accuse thee to thy fellow men.
 No price for this, thou sleeper, shalt thou pay.
 It ended—and that vision pass'd away.

390

Another came—Within a deep ravine
 A camp was pitch'd—proud dreamer, it is thine!
 The soldiers of a thousand distant coasts
 Swell'd up that army with their gather'd hosts:
 The dull Siberian from his pine-tree shade,
 The Cossack, Tartar, Russian, renegade,
 Were there together. Thick as leaves they lay,
 Swept from the forest in an autumn day,
 Myriads, who cared not how they urged the blow,
 And hardly knew their master from their foe;
 Reckless of guilt, and strangers unto shame,
 Their pastime murder, plunder all their aim.
 O! hath high heaven its thunderbolts forgot—
 Is there a hand can check them—is there *not*?

400

410

Earth was its own avenger. Secret death
 Breathed out invisibly a poison breath;
 Engender'd in her dark and silent womb,
 It rose, like vapour from a noisome tomb,
 Damp as a mildew, thin, and piercing cold
 As the thaw breath upon a wintry wold:
 It crept amidst the army. As of yore
 The Pythian shafts flew fast along the shore,
 And victim warriors strew'd the bloodless sod,
 Smote by the vengeance of the angry God—
 So flew the pestilence. For many a year
 The soldier stood in battle's front of fear;
 Saw the hot iron tempest showering fast,
 Yet 'scaped the fury of its heedless blast;
 Now, like a prize, his forfeit life is won,
 The plague can do what war has left undone,

420

For it hath gain'd the mastery—the brave,
 The craven, master, chieftain, serf, and slave, 430
 All sink alike—the sharp and griding pain
 Thrills through the body even to the brain;
 Hot madness glares within the bloodshot eye,
 They writhe and shriek, and curse, blaspheme, and die!
 The living turn with loathing from the dead,
 They dare not fling the dust upon their head.
 They lie and rot, and moulder—they are given
 Unto the charnel-worm, and winds of heaven:
 Long may their children stand at even-tide,
 By the low cottage on the mountain side, 440
 And think they hear the distant bugle-horn
 Of him they love, across the blue lake borne;
 Long may they wait, till hope grows pale and sick,
 And fearful thoughts come crowding fast and thick;
 The winds may come and dirge them, and the rain
 Wash with its tears their relics on the plain,
 And the rank grass may spring, and close around—
 It is their only monument and mound!—
 What price for this, thou sleeper, shalt thou pay?
 It ended, and that vision pass'd away. 450

Another came—Within the deepen'd blue,
 Faintly look'd out a pensive star or two;
 The moon was down, the wind, like one in pain,
 Drove its long sigh across the snowy plain:
 There are dark stains upon that purest page,
 Stern marks of man's accursed sacrilege;
 Footsteps deep dented, and a trampled targe,
 Where broke the thunder of the squadron-charge.
 It is a battle-field: The watchfire's light 460
 Gleams from a distant camp into the night—
 What mighty power is centred in a breath!
 There moveth life, here lieth silent death.
 That day, upon a field of no renown,
 Freedom and Murder sat together down;
 The stakes were armies, warring all around,
 And struggling sternly for the vantage ground;
 Freedom was faint, and on her forehead pale
 The mantling fears wrote down a crimson tale;
 But Murder's eye was fix'd, her hand threw fast,
 Like one whose life was set upon a cast, 470
 And when the latest, deepest die was flung,
 She clapp'd her hands with joy, and then upsprung,
 And shriek'd,—'Tis mine!—'tis mine! this field shall be
 Named of my name—the tomb of Liberty!

The wolf hath stolen from his mountain cave,
 And glideth down like one who robs a grave;

His eye is red, his throat is parch'd and dumb,
 Scarce can you hear his footsteps as they come;
 He springs, with savage haste and grim delight,
 Upon the first dead corse that meets his sight, 480
 And tears, and feeds, and scowls with jealous eye
 Upon the pamper'd vulture flitting by—
 Czar! there are vaults wherein thy fathers sleep,
 Round which the marble statues bend and weep;
 O, fitting truth! no tears but those are shed
 Above the cold and marble-hearted dead.
 Yet it were nobler far, if they had died
 In such a cause, with none to mourn beside;
 Yea, had they found, like these, a living tomb
 Within that lean and loathsome creature's womb, 490
 It had been better far. Then Fame had sung
 Their righteous deeds with her immortal tongue;
 Then had their names been register'd indeed
 Within the Book which none but freemen read.
 What is their memory? What will be thine own?
 The idle record of a lying stone!—
 A worthless parasite's regret; or worse,
 A purchased prayer!—Will it efface a curse?
 There, with thy kindred, shalt thou lie and rot;—
 Hope thou thy name at least may be forgot! 500

Seest thou that dying soldier on the ground,
 Whose life is ebbing from a ghastly wound?
 He hath no bed except the frozen snow,
 No friend to wipe the death-damp from his brow;
 His eye is struggling through the mist afar
 To catch the glimmer of that feeble star;
 Why doth he seek its light so faint and dim?
 It is no star of hope, alas, to him!
 Ay—but it shineth on, his quiet home,
 That nest of peace, where war hath never come; 510
 Within his fancy, even now he sees
 The old thatch'd roof beneath the linden trees,
 The cradle, where his youngest infant sleeps,
 Rock'd by his widow'd wife, who bends and weeps;
 He sees his children that around her kneel,
 And try to calm the grief they cannot feel.
 Say, doth he weep? No tear is in his eye:
 Tyrant! It is no ghastly thing to die!
 He fears it not, he hath no damning sin
 To lime the soul, or cage it fluttering in. 520
 His part is done—it was a glorious part!
 He shielded freedom even with his heart,
 Till it was pierced, and now into the air
 He breathes for her a blessing and a prayer,

Shuts with a holy smile his heavy eyes,
Commends his country to his God, and dies!

Dreamer! if death had enter'd in thy tower,
To count the moments of thy latest hour—
If the hot fever madness stretch'd thee there,
With nothing left but penitence or prayer— 530
Wouldst thou, like him, compose thy limbs to rest,
Unscared by phantom forms, and thoughts unblest?
Wouldst thou, like him, peruse the tablets o'er
That lie deep graven in the bosom's core,
Nor find one black, or one unholy deed
Within the page of conscience register'd?
Say, wouldst thou calmly lay thee down to sleep,
Bless those who sigh, and comfort those who weep,
Then turn away unto the blessed shore,
Where sorrow clouds and sin distracts no more? 540
Ah! wherefore ask of thee a thing so vain—
That very thought hath rankled in thy brain;
'Tis shunn'd by thee, as one in crowded throng
Shuns him whom he hath wrought some deadly wrong,
And keeps his face averted when they meet.
Crime, to such hearts as thine, is surely sweet,
Or stern repentance is a thing of fear,
Fled from, and shuffled off from year to year;
That thought to thee, is like the naked sword
Hung o'er the head of the Sicilian lord, 550
Seen at the feast, and glittering through the veil,
Until the cheek of mirth grew blanch'd and pale.
Hast thou no wish, no hope to rise and flee?
Stay, then, and perish!—few will weep for thee.

Awake, thou sleeper! from thy mental sight
The dreams have pass'd unto the waning night;
Yet, ere thou goest forth, remember this,
Though old the doctrine, true the moral is,
The weak are judged less hardly than the strong,
A king who sins, commits a triple wrong: 560
True are the words, and more than man-inspired,
'Much hath been given, and much shall be required.'
Didst thou receive thy power from Freedom's God
To change thy sceptre for an iron rod;
To tear the gem of mercy from thy crown,
To hew, without remorse, the green tree down;
To make the gyving chain, and dungeon breath,
The punishment for those who fear'd not death;
To loose thy savage and relentless band,
Like swarming locusts on a peaceful land; 570
To pluck down Freedom from her blessed throne,
And for her standard there exalt thine own?

O, wilt thou hear him vaunt, thou righteous Heaven!
 That for such ends as these his power was given?
 Wilt thou not strike amidst his sinful mirth,
 This royal miscreant even to the earth?
 Hast thou no chosen champion of the free,
 Is there no Attila to strike for thee?
 Or wilt thou still thy wrath and vengeance hide,
 When we have none to range on virtue's side, 580
 When we have grown so frantic, as to quell
 The torch our fathers lit and loved so well?
 It may be so—but these, what have they done?
 It was their light, more honour'd than the sun;
 Their beacon-fire upon the distant cape,
 When rose the ocean in its hideous shape;
 Their pledge of safety; they have kept it well,
 Alas! why was it not unquenchable?
 Thou know'st it was a virtue not to sin,
 To burst the chain, when tyrants hemm'd them in; 590
 Thou know'st how ill the truly noble heart
 Can stoop to act a slave's dishonest part;
 How life itself is weary, dull, and vain,
 When not a limb can move without a chain.
 When tyrants and their minions dare to thrust
 A cruel arm against the brave and just,
 The naked hand will rise against the steel;
 A trampled worm will turn upon the heel.
 Earth is abased, but 'tis not brought so low
 That it must bend to every vaunting foe. 600
 Are we so mean, that rude and ruffian might
 Can make the evil cause appear the right?
 Is Justice then so terrified or rare,
 That she must lose her homage in despair?
 No, no, it is not so! Though long delay'd
 That cause, the cause of nations shall be made;
 The good, the true, the terrible, and strong
 Have slept awhile—they will not slumber long;
 Now, even now, men's hearts are wide awake,
 Too long has truth been lost for treason's sake. 610
 Already hath the sky obscured its face,
 The clouds are gathering in their muster-place;
 The storm is climbing up its angry path,
 Big with the vengeful thunders of its wrath;
 None but the innocent may hope to stay.
 Whither, ye tyrants, will you flee away?

O! that a new Tyrtaeus would awake,
 To speak aloud as never man yet spake;
 To scatter forth his passion like a shower,
 With voice of glory, and with words of power; 620

To rouse the passive nations, till they feel
 The startling justice of that high appeal;
 Until the spirit, caged within the soul,
 Were free, and bounding onwards to the goal!
 Until they knew it were a crime to rest,
 When one brave heart was prison'd or oppress!
 Until, with one accord, they started up,
 Strong, as a giant rising from his cup!
 Bright, as an eagle at the dawn of day,
 Who shakes the slumbers from his eyes away, 630
 Plumes his long wings, and meditates his flight
 Above the clouds that curtain down the light!
 Then would we purge the world of all the crime
 That stains and blurs the latest page of time—
 Then would we strike, ay, even in his den,
 This coward robber of defenceless men—
 Then would we burst the gate, and snap the chain,
 Bring forth the captive into light again,
 Drive the dark savage to his native wild,
 And leave at least half Europe undefiled! 640

Our days of sloth are number'd to the fill—
 Our fathers would have risen when we were still.
 Yet fear not, Poland, from the slumbering heart,
 Our better spirit cannot all depart;
 A voice is pealing loudly in an ear,
 That does not sleep, though it is slow to hear;
 Thou art not friendless, though thou art alone,
 Thy lips are mute, but memory hath not gone.
 It were a shameful and a deathless stain,
 To let a cry like thine be heard in vain. 650
 Our annals shall not bear upon their face,
 The damning marks of such a foul disgrace;
 They shall not tell we heard a suppliant's call,
 And idly stood beside to see her fall;
 They shall not tell that Britain's voice was given
 To hail a deed that bore the curse of heaven!
 Once, once, indeed, we raised a cruel hand
 Against the freemen of a daughter land,
 And met, as all who dare the like should meet,
 Our just reward in vengeance and defeat: 660
 But not again shall such a deed appear,
 To wring from Freedom's eye one bitter tear—
 He, who hath spent long years of sad unrest,
 A prison's inmate, or a dungeon's guest,
 Where he could only count the lagging hour
 By one faint sunbeam sliding on the floor;
 Where he could only guess the joyous spring,
 By the mild breeze and gay birds twittering;

He would not doom to such a lingering fate,
 The very object of his deadliest hate;
 How can we tamely see the vanquished brave,
 Borne from the reeking scaffold to the grave,
 And not remember how our fathers died,
 To keep our glorious birthright sanctified?
 The field where Hampden's blameless blood was shed—
 The block where gallant Sidney bow'd his head—
 Are these forgotten? Has their memory gone
 Like common trifles idly gazed upon?
 Have we forgot how Scotland's patriots rose
 To fight the war of God with banded foes?
 Far up the hills, amidst some lonely glen,
 They met, the brave and persecuted men!
 A holy remnant of the just and true,
 Sworn to that faith which tyrants never knew:
 Hunted from house and home, they gather'd there
 To offer up to Heaven their spotless prayer;
 They knelt around, while one, with lifted hand,
 Invoked a blessing on that martyr band,
 From Him, who never yet hath heard in vain,
 The righteous murmur, or the good complain:
 Then rose they up, and sang with one accord,
 Their sweet and simple anthem to the Lord;
 Till the far shepherd on the mountain's brow,
 Who heard the notes arise so faint and low,
 Might deem in such a place, that holy hymn
 Was raised and chanted by the seraphim!
 They went to battle—not as armies go,
 Who blindly smite an unoffending foe;
 Forth to a glorious field they march'd unaw'd,
 The chosen champions of the living God:
 They fought and triumph'd, as the good and just,
 Who fight in such a cause, for ever must.
 We are their children! Have we then no pride
 To rise and combat on our fathers' side?
 Are we not sworn unto the sacred fight,
 To crush the guilty, and defend the right?
 The very blood that runs within our veins
 Throbs at the name of prison, or of chains:
 The cup of liberty is not so small
 That we can drain it—it was fill'd for all.
 Britain, arise! O, yet while it is time,
 In such a cause delay is worse than crime:
 Speak! that the tyrant's soul may shrink with fear;
 Speak! with a voice, that all the world may hear;
 Thy wrath as with a herald's trump proclaim;
 For where is he who quails not at thy name?
 O sleep not, wait not, do not tarry long—
 Be just, be brave, be good as thou art strong;

670

680

690

700

710

Come, thou fair Queen; for, as the traveller eyes
 The first grey streaks upon the eastern skies, 720
 So earth has fix'd her anxious gaze on thee:
 Come forth—come forth—thou idol of the free!

Warrior of Justice! Freedom's noblest son,
 Bright is the wreath of glory thou hast won,
 Thou patriot, worthy of the olden time—
 Thou friend of right—thou enemy of crime!
 Great Czartoryski, thy transcendent name
 Is the last enter'd in the roll of fame:
 Weep not because thou couldst not burst the chain,
 For often truth has drawn her sword in vain. 730
 More than his blood the Spartan could not give,
 And Cato died when justice ceased to live—
 Yet do not weep, for thou hast gain'd a meed,
 And won a laurel fresh and bright indeed.
 Thou more than king! when ages yet unborn
 Shall brand the tyrant with the stamp of scorn,
 Those deeds of thine shall win thee more renown,
 Than clings around the best and greatest crown;
 Fathers shall bid their children think of thee,
 And learn to worship truth and liberty; 740
 Thou shalt be sung in many a poet's lay,
 As the best champion of our modern day;
 Pilgrims shall come from farthest shores of earth
 To see the glorious land that gave thee birth;
 A deeper homage than at Mecca's shrine
 Is paid unto the Prophet, shall be thine.
 Loved in thy life, and honoured in thy grave—
 Such are the glories that await the brave!

Fear not, poor country! nothing is so great
 But hath some foe in those of worse estate; 750
 What is so bright that looks not faint and pale,
 When seen through Jealousy's distorted veil?
 The sun himself is dim, when darkness strips
 Half of his lustre in the slow eclipse;
 Yet, even as that shadow moves away,
 And unjust night gives place to glorious day,
 So shall that gloom of terror and despair
 Melt from thy brow, like vapour into air;
 Pure and unblemish'd as a virgin bride,
 Shalt thou go forth in beauty's conscious pride; 760
 Worship'd as one of renovated birth,
 The last and fairest wonder of the earth,
 In whom, as in a Goddess, we behold
 All that the poets feign'd and dreamt of old.
 Bring forth the crown, the robe, and royal gem.
 Kneel down, and bend the knee to offer them.

Let none, except the guilty voice, be dumb,
 Shout! for the times of happiness have come;
 The gloom is gone, the night hath pass'd away,
 We hail the dawning of a glorious day. 770
 Hope, the bright bird that sings as soon as born,
 Hath pour'd his lay to greet the rising morn;
 And Peace, the holiest of created things,
 Is there, with balm and healing on his wings!
 Ye, who have seen her in the trial hour,
 When fear, and pain, and grief had triple power;
 Ye, who have heard her sobs of sore distress,
 And breath'd a blessing when none else would bless;
 You are the chosen of her festal throng,
 Come forth, and join her triumph and her song; 780
 She seeks the blessed shrine where freemen bow,
 To offer up her thanks, and pledge a vow:
 Thanks for the spirit that has leapt abroad,
 And roused the just to fight the war of God!
 Thanks, for the holy arm no more delay'd,
 Now lifted up to make the proud dismay'd;
 A vow of sacred and undying birth,
 Against the banded tyrants of the earth,
 Which in her heart of hearts shall still remain,
 Till man is cleansed from every blot and stain! 790
 He who would live, come over to her side,
 Before that vow is sworn and ratified;
 By her a holy war, a just crusade,
 To strike the powers of darkness, shall be made;
 The sword which fathers to their sons bequeath,
 Again for freedom shall forsake its sheath,
 Knit to the hand, that never raised before
 Its gleaming blade with such resistless power;
 There will be beacons glaring through the night—
 There will be warriors arming for the fight— 800
 There will be gathering from the glade and glen,
 Unto the camp of brave and righteous men;
 They will march out, a pure and purging flame,
 To free the world from bondage, sin, and shame:
 They will be conquerors, for who shall stay
 To meet with Vengeance in its stern array?
 Then shall we know the times that bards of old,
 And gifted prophets in their lays foretold;
 Peace shall descend from Heaven, and banish'd love
 Shall haunt again the mountain and the grove; 810
 Again at shut of eve, and dawn of morn,
 The low sweet notes of blessing shall be borne,
 Like rich and fuming incense shall they rise,
 Earth's grateful tribute to the smiling skies:
 The serpent, Hate, shall find some cavern deep,
 And coil itself to everlasting sleep:

And Fear shall die, and Death itself grow mild,
 And seek the aged as it seeks the child,
 Its terrors sooth'd, its anguish lost and gone,
 Itself a passport to a blessed throne! 820

O come, my brothers! at her glorious sign
 We go to kneel and worship at the shrine—
 We go to pledge the oath with heart and hand,
 As listed champions in that chosen band—
 We go to war with enemies that lie
 Betwixt our life and immortality!
 The sun is climbing proudly up the skies,
 O hasten, hasten, ye are slow to rise!
 Lo! they are standing at the temple gate;
 For us alone the bridal train doth wait; 830
 Too long already hath their tarrying been,—
 Fling wide the portal to the peerless Queen!

HOMER

I

FAR in the glass of the Aegean sea
 There lies a lonely and sequester'd isle,
 Where Innocence was queen—fair queen! whom we
 Desire to seek, but cannot; impious guile
 Was there unknown. The gentle and the free
 Gazed on each other with unclouded smile,
 And Beauty, with a hand of melting power,
 Tended that garden like a faery bower.

II

A cottage stood within a shelter'd nook,
 Where a clear stream ran past with joyous song 10
 Into the bay. Two aged poplars shook
 Above the roof their branches leaved and long;
 The goats went pilfering flowers beside the brook,
 Or wander'd up the scented shrubs among
 That clothed a neighbouring hill; the bee flew fast
 To gather nectar for his sweet repast.

III

An aged shepherd dwelt within that hut,
 The patriarch of his primitive domain,
 Who many a year had watch'd the morning put
 Its glowing belt across the azure main, 20
 And seen the glooming gates of evening shut
 When the high lands were swathed with drizzling rain;
 There was he born—there had he lived alone
 With two young orphans of a perish'd son.

IV

They were dear children; one with eyes as blue
 As the rich vault of heaven, and sunny hair,
 Whose heart had caught the gay and joyous hue
 Of that glad climate and bewitching air;
 The hours as swift as moments past him flew,
 Sweet moments—when the spirit knows no care! 30
 He seem'd from every thing some joy to quaff,
 And show'd his lightness by a gleesome laugh.

V

The other was a child of darker mood,
 Yet of a temper mild as it was brave;
 Often beside the rocky cliffs he stood,
 And gazed for hours upon the breaking wave,
 And then a quick and hectic flush of blood
 Unto his cheek a richer colour gave;
 He seem'd to commune with the sea and sky,
 And think, or dream of immortality! 40

VI

There would he wait until the patient night
 Came, and the stars were out and glittering;
 Some distant from their fellows, pale and white,
 Some wheeling in a clear and joyous ring,
 And draw from them the visions infinite
 Which Nature's glories to a poet bring,
 When Silence, like an old mysterious priest,
 Unites the earth and sky in holy rest.

VII

He cared not for the airy lays that moved
 His brother's heart to gladness, as the swain 50
 Sung on some holiday; but when he proved
 The wild enchantment of Amphion's strain,
 Or told how Orpheus for his well-beloved,
 Unto the Thracian mountains did complain,
 He sat and listened all in silent tears,
 Mixing most strangely with their hopes and fears.

VIII

And then his heart beat ardently, he felt
 The charmed power deep sown in poets' lays;
 He caught the spell that passion hath to melt
 The spirit in its many trancing ways; 60
 And like a new-won proselyte he knelt,
 And worship'd beauty in his childish phrase;
 And pray'd, and waited for a single glance
 Caught from the splendour of her countenance.

IX

And on the winter nights, when by the fire
That aged man told wondrous histories
Of wars, and ancient kings who did conspire
To sack old Thebes, that child between his knees
Gazed on the wither'd features of his sire,
Intent with eager wistfulness to seize
The import of each word, the whilst the other
Laugh'd at the earnest posture of his brother.

70

X

So grew they up, and time did not estrange
Their feelings with its cold and noiseless art;
One only hoped through life ungall'd to range,
And meet its fortunes with a merry heart;
The other, too, had felt no turn or change,
He knew he must fulfil a nobler part;
He dared not check the torrent of his mind,
He dared not die and leave no name behind.

80

XI

Yet were there many found with eyes so blear'd
By gazing on the earth for ugly gold,
Till every thing like worthless toys appear'd,
That in their market was not bought and sold,
Who came to him, and whisper'd what they fear'd,
Then show'd their tale of profits thrice retold,
And urged him to their mean and narrow ways—
Fools! what is wealth to him who covets praise?

XII

Fools! you are nothing even to your earth;
What have you done for honour or for her?
What have you done, but made a dreary dearth
Of love and beauty in her character?
My curse be on his head, who first gave birth
Unto such fantasies as now deter
The good, the great, the gifted, and the just,
From rising over low and sordid dust!

90

XIII

You have your riches, and you ask no more!
Dare not to pity him who scorns your aim;
Live on and smile, and add unto your store,
Ye noble victors in a noble game!
Heap up your riches on your garner floor,
But do not speak to him who seeks for fame;
For he is pledged unto another oath,
And there is nothing common to you both.

100

XIV

He heard them not, or heard them but with scorn.
 He fled unto the forest, all alone;
 There, couchant 'midst the flowers and grass unshorn,
 He framed that lay of rare and wondrous tone,
 Which even now upon our lips is borne,
 Which men of every tongue have made their own;
 That lay which true and tearful passion hath,
 That lay which tells of dire Achilles' wrath. 111

XV

It grew upon his fancy day by day,
 As love upon a fervid spirit grows;
 Even when he slept, the music rang away,
 And conjured pictures to his blank repose.
 The darkness was an echo of the day,
 Wherein some dream new visions did disclose;
 He woke in kindled hope, and strove to write
 In words the speechless magic of the night. 120

XVI

It was to him a bright and holy thing,
 His own creation ever in his eyes;
 A spell that from its deep and secret spring
 Called up his strange and wondrous energies.
 The heavens alone behold him sit and sing
 How Ajax combats, and how Hector dies!
 And every chant by love or passion rung,
 Seems like a murmur from a Dryad's tongue.

XVII

The heavens beheld him, and the earth was still.
 There was no calling voice or whisper'd word 130
 Murmured, save where, far up the wooded hill,
 Trilled the low twitter of some plaining bird,
 Or where within the vale, the screened rill
 Spoke out, at times by swooning fits unheard;
 Untrod by foot, unknown by other face,
 Was this most beautiful and lonely place.

XVIII

And even as a limner's easy hand
 Portrays upon the white and formless page,
 A haunted scene within some faery land,
 Or youthful form that never smiled at age; 140
 So did his rich and strong creations stand
 Thought-raised, and mingled on that silent stage,
 Until the very wilderness had life,
 And seem'd to blaze with arms, and ring with strife.

XIX

At length his task was ended and complete,
 But then he felt as if a friend were gone :
 The very labour was a thing more sweet
 Than reaping of the harvest he had sown ;
 And 'twas a work of pity to unseat
 The queen, fair Fancy, from her royal throne,— 150
 To turn his eyes from her enchanting look,
 And fix them on life's dull and vulgar book.

XX

Again he went unto his old abode,
 But felt like one who leaves a pleasant dream
 Of wandering through some region all untrod
 By mortal step, or floating down a stream
 Elysian, underneath the shadows broad
 Of ancient trees, that screen the sultry beam
 From off his boat, and waking up to pain,
 Would fain return unto his sleep again ! 160

XXI

O, 'twere a pleasant thing to rear a bower
 Within the mazes of the human heart,
 To be a shelter from the chilling shower
 Rain'd upon nature by the storm of art ;
 Where grief might have no entrance, sin no power,
 Where memory might find refuge from the smart
 Of all the many wounds that man has known,
 Since first he wedded sorrow as his own !

XXII

It were a pleasant thing to live and die
 In company with such sweet solitude, 170
 To bar the door on sad reality,
 And shun the world with its intrusive brood ;
 Alas ! we cannot 'scape its piercing eye,
 It is a foe that ever will intrude ;
 For we are bound unto its constant sway,
 So let us even face it as we may.

XXIII

He bow'd unto the whisper of his soul
 That urged him not to rest or tarry there,
 For such a mind as his, the hard control
 Was all too narrow of that island air ; 180
 Fame is too proud to see or mark a goal
 Within the boundary of an atmosphere ;
 And he who enters on the lists of pride,
 Must fling his scruples and their ties aside.

XXIV

Then did he visit each familiar place
 Which as a child and as a boy he knew,
 He went to gaze on each remember'd face,
 To hear each voice, the tender and the true,
 To fold within a last and sad embrace
 Those that he loved so deeply; and there grew 190
 Upon his heart a sick and bursting weight,
 The very grief of parting was so great.

XXV

At length he cross'd the broad and prison sea—
 He was a stranger in a foreign land;
 He had no friend to ask for sympathy,
 No brother with a fond and helping hand;
 As nameless as some wondrous Indian tree
 Cast by the waters on a northern strand,
 He stood amidst the cold and busy crowd,
 Then lifted up his voice, and sang aloud. 200

XXVI

He sang how Paris left his native Troy,
 To win fair Helen from her absent lord,
 And how she fled with that deceitful boy,
 Lured by his winning form and melting word;
 How monarchs swore to work him dire annoy,
 And half the world girt on the vengeful sword;
 How Agamemnon led the Grecian powers,
 And pour'd their battle round the Phrygian towers.

XXVII

He told how from the star-inwoven realm
 The gods descended to the earthly fray, 210
 How Mars put on his adamantine helm
 To head the Trojans in their stern array;
 How dark Minerva strove to overwhelm
 His boiling pride; how darkness conquer'd day,
 When Jove arose in all his kingly wrath,
 And drove his thunder to its scorching path!

XXVIII

Then fiercer grew the spirit on his tongue,
 When red Sarpedon urged his furious car;
 The lances splinter'd, and the corslets rung,
 As Ajax crush'd into the bristling war! 220
 Above whose din the shout of terror sprung,
 When Hector's spear shot, like a falling star
 That hath a power to slay, but not to wound,
 And dashed Patroclus on the gory ground.

XXIX

Forth rush'd Achilles in his quenchless rage,
 With heart as ardent as a forger's flame!
 And Troy gave back, for no one durst engage
 Or cope with him who ever overcame;
 Even as a lion leaps from out his cage,
 When men have deem'd his tameless spirit tame, 250
 And gluts his vengeance in unmeasured blood,
 So legions shudder'd when he rush'd abroad.

XXX

In vain they fled, they stood and fought in vain,
 For death had cast a charm upon his spear;
 Some foot by foot went back, and turn'd again,
 Some sternly died, some shriek'd, but none might hear.
 The warders look'd upon the shifting plain,
 And trembled when they saw the foe so near;
 And even at the gates, the fugitive
 Look'd round and wonder'd how he chanced to live! 240

XXXI

Alone the princely captain shunn'd the wall,
 To meet this victor of all human kind;
 In vain he heard his wife, his parents call—
 He could not leave so lost a field behind.
 They saw them meet, they saw their champion fall—
 They shriek'd, and wept, and wish'd that they were blind!
 They saw the thongs thrust through his pierced heels,
 And bought his body from the chariot wheels.

XXXII

Then ceased the strain. As when a solemn tone
 Hath fallen from some ancient oracle, 250
 Men stand and listen, though the voice is gone,
 As if they thought once more to catch the spell;
 So when the passion of that tale was done,
 No word, no whisper from the hearers fell;
 They stood in wonder for a little space,
 Then read their feelings on each other's face.

XXXIII

They gave him all he sought: around his head
 They placed the Delphic laurel's sacred wreath.
 O never shall a leaf from thence be shed,
 While bards have honour, or whilst man has breath! 260
 There power and glory were together wed,
 To live the second life that knows no death;
 There shall they be, till earth has past away,
 Till darkness wins dominion from the day.

XXXIV

Even as the beacon fires glare fast along,
 When armies land upon a hostile shore;
 So throughout Greece the passion of his song
 Was hurried, and men's wonder grew the more:
 Round every wandering minstrel did they throng,
 To bid him sing that story o'er and o'er;
 And caught again a sparkle of the fires
 That blazed within the bosoms of their sires.

270

XXXV

And those of other lands were thrill'd with joy
 And wonder at the magic songs he gave.
 Within the lone and silent plain of Troy.
 Where swift Scamander leaps through Helle's wave,
 His lays were chanted by the shepherd boy,
 Who drove his flock from many a hero's grave,
 And tore the plants of harsh and rank perfume
 That grew and blossom'd on Achilles' tomb.

280

XXXVI

And if a poet had no higher meed
 Than this, it were enough; enough, to make
 A name forgotten as a trampled weed,
 Bloom into memory even for his sake;
 To clothe the earth with his exalted creed;
 To see the spirit of the nations shake,
 At the bare word that leaves his kindled lips,
 As the rude savage gazes at the ships!

XXXVII

What tells of Priam save the ancient strain?
 Speaks not Orestes from the Grecian stage?
 Ilion had blazed, and Dido bled in vain,
 But that the story lives in Virgil's page:
 Touched by a single note, they now remain
 Above the wrecks of many a faded age,
 Like columns in a desert, bare and wide;
 And this is fame! now what is earthly pride?

290

XXXVIII

O happy days! when there were none to mar
 The gush of feeling in its sunny morn;
 When no invidious lips waged rancorous war,
 Or struck down genius with the blow of scorn;
 On every forehead now some graven scar,
 Cut in by secret jealousy, is borne;
 No heart can open but 'tis chill'd or crost,
 As buds are smitten by the nightly frost.

300

XXXIX

Why is a poet now so poor a thing,
 That every common hand may hunt him down ?
 Why must his fancies perish in their spring,
 Why must he bend to each ignoble frown ?
 Is it that we have lost the eagle wing,
 And dare not venture for the laurel crown,
 That hangs too high for every bard to reach,
 And is not to be won by vulgar speech ?

310

XL

Or is it, that because the world is old,
 The hearts of men are waxing older too ;
 So that each lay, however sweetly told,
 Dies in its birth, because it is not new ?
 Why then to them the very sun is cold,
 And the mere sky has lost its glorious hue—
 Ay, and their dull philosophy can see
 No wonder in the strangest mystery !

320

XLI

In the dark oven of their minds they parch
 All nature's brilliant colours into one ;
 They marvel nothing at the seasons' march,
 They speak not of the rise or set of sun ;
 They can dissolve the rainbow's glorious arch,
 They count the stars within their garrison ;
 They drag to day the secrets of the tomb,
 And call it light where it is deepest gloom !

XLII

But we shall not despair ; yet, even yet,
 The light of song is lingering on our sky ;
 And there are planets when the sun is set,
 And after them comes morning fresh and free :
 Some daring spirits on the shore have met,
 To launch their bark upon the rolling sea.
 And there are golden islands far away,
 That bask and gladden in eternal day.

330

XLIII

Ungathered blow the lilies by the foot
 Of old Parnassus, in the meadows green ;
 The answer of its echoes is not mute,
 And there are waters still in Hippocrene ;
 And we shall hear once more the modern lute
 Bring its enchantment to the ancient scene,
 And utter music to the hills again,
 With the wild plainings of a lonely strain.

340

XLIV

Why flags my tale? Alas, 'tis hard to turn,
 And chronicle again the faded past!
 To see alone the starry lights that burn
 Within the old empyrean, and to cast
 Vain looks upon the future; in their urn
 Sleep things that shall be seen and sung at last, 350
 When we have past away, and children then
 Shall read of us, as we of ancient men.

XLV

Life is too short:—the child becomes a man,
 Before he knows how happy childhood is;
 We hurry swiftly thro' our little span,
 Our sorrows soon forgot, our cup of bliss
 Almost untasted. Hope, that ever ran
 Before us, sinks at last, and then we miss
 The moments that have faded long ago,
 And weep that aught should have deceived us so. 360

XLVI

O! few are they who know this ancient truth,
 And live like misers hoarding up their time;
 Age has its gewgaws, and fantastic youth
 Seeks for a memory in feeble rhyme,
 Gathering some golden ears of fame, as Ruth
 Gleaned her scant harvest in the autumn prime,
 That live perhaps to show the world alone
 How immortality has lost a son!

XLVII

Time had not marr'd the beauty of the isle,
 But left its aspect ever fair and new; 370
 Still bloomed the shrubs upon the wooded hill,
 Beside the cottage still the poplars grew;
 And, even as before, the leaping rill
 Went murmuring by, and nature kept its hue
 So well, that human eye could hardly trace
 The hand of time upon its smiling face.

XLVIII

An aged man sat in the evening mild,
 And watch'd some young Icarian infants fling
 Flowers on each other in their play; he smiled
 Like dying winter on the buds of spring. 380
 They were the children of his youngest child,
 Yet to his eye that sight a tear did bring;
 Perchance he thought upon the bygone day
 When he was mirthful and as young as they.

XLIX

Athwart the bright and quivering path of gold,
 Paved from the setting sun unto the shore,
 Landward there moved a boat, with sail unroll'd,
 And flapping by the mast; when the broad oar
 Struck on the beach, a feeble man and old
 Stepp'd slowly down upon the shell-strewn floor, 393
 And a fair boy descending took his hand,
 And led his footsteps up the sloping strand.

L

Blind seem'd the stranger, and around his brows
 The snow-white hair waved thin as winds went by;
 The burden almost of a century's woes
 Had bowed his head, and marred his majesty.
 They near'd the cottage, and the shepherd rose
 And looked upon him with a pitying eye,
 Scanning his faded form, then with a low
 And gentle voice asked, 'Stranger, who art thou?' 400

LI

'Then am I quite forgot!' with feeble cry
 The stranger answered, 'Then I am forgot!
 That voice was speaking to my memory,
 And now I hear it!'—Still he answered not.
 'O take me by the hand before I die!
 Methinks we parted on this very spot,
 And I have come to ask a little room
 Within my native island for my tomb.

LII

'O misery! I cannot see thy face,
 And thou like me art old, and haply blind;
 I am thy brother!'—With a piteous gaze 410
 The old man look'd, as if he thought to find
 In those worn features some remember'd trace,
 Then fell upon his neck—'Within my mind
 There is an image, yet I scarce can see
 Wherein that image doth resemble thee!

LIII

'O! 'tis a long, long time since we have met,
 And thou, my brother, thou art changed indeed;
 Thy face is as a stranger's face, and yet
 My heart is shaking in me like a reed! 420
 It asks me how I ever could forget
 A voice like thine; alas! I feel it bleed
 With a strange double wound of love and pain,
 To see thee thus, yet see thee once again!

LIV

'Thou speakest not!'—He raised his head; there hung
 Upon his lips a smile, as o'er a grave
 Hangs one deserted blossom; on his tongue
 Some accents falter'd, but they died, and gave
 No utterance, his heart was all unstrung—
 His mind was wandering darkly in its cave. 430
 They led him from the damp and chilly air,
 They brought him to the hut, and placed him there.

LV

They took a lute and touch'd it to his ear,
 They sang an ancient, now forgotten, lay,
 To rouse him from his trance. A single tear,
 Forced by the memory of another day,
 Stole down his cheek; the aged man drew near,
 And whisper'd, but the whisper pass'd away
 Unnoticed and unheard—he spoke again,
 And took one hand—it fell—'twas all in vain! 440

LVI

The string was snapt across, the harp had shed
 Unto the wandering winds its latest tone;
 The lamp was broken, and the light was dead,
 The fuel of his life was spent and gone;
 Unto the heaven of heavens the soul had fled,
 And left the mansion empty and alone!
 They laid him underneath the poplar trees,
 When the lone moonbeam slept upon the seas.

LVII

There in a humble grave he lies unknown,
 Pass'd daily over by the shepherd's tread. 450
 The wild-flowers wave around; one simple stone,
 Long since moss-buried, is above his head!
 And many a little mound through Greece is shown
 Where legends fable that his dust is laid.—
 What doth it matter where the casket lies,
 When the great jewel sparkles in our eyes?

LVIII

There is a moral in my tale—Behold!
 The children and the men, they were the same:
 One was a beggar, poor, and blind, and old,
 A wretched wanderer—HOMER was his name! 460
 Ask you the other's? More than I have told
 Lives not his memory on the lips of fame.
 Ye to whom life, and youth, and hope are new,
 Come near and pause,—which choose you of the two?

A LAMENT FOR PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

Is there no fading of thy central fire,
 Spirit of Nature! when thou hear'st the string
 That from thy chosen and harmonious lyre
 Was wont the utmost melody to wring,
 Snap, with the load of its own murmuring?
 Hast thou no desolate anthem, that may make
 Response to such a lost and broken thing?
 Hast thou no echoes, faint and scarce awake?
 No music meet for him who died for music's sake?

Go, call the winds from the tempestuous north— 10
 Scourge up the rugged ocean from his sleep,
 And bid their fearful choristry fling forth
 The thunder-organ'd chant across the deep;
 To mourn for him, for whom I fain would weep,
 Were not mine eyes weak traitors to my brain,
 That throbs bewildered by a weary heap
 Of dull unfledged thoughts of common strain,
 That drive my tears away, and vex me into pain!

Unprison'd tempest, and thou, unknown cry 20
 Of ocean in his wrath, which none may hear
 Abroad within the ships and live! pent sigh,
 Which the great earth doth utter, when her ear
 Shrinks from some nameless whisper, like a spear
 Startling her entrails! ye were heard aloud,
 Pouring your accents o'er the poet's bier,
 When the great billows whiten'd like a cloud
 Around the lifeless corpse, and swathed it in their shroud!

Upon a bare and desolated shore,
 Where the tired waters jangle with the shells,
 The ocean flung the wasted form it bore 30
 Amongst its ridged lines and tufted swells;
 There was he found. No toll of churchyard bells
 Rings for his burial; no mourners keep
 Watch o'er his coffin, till the iron nails
 Rivet him down—they laid him on a heap,
 Like an old Roman chief who sleeps his wakeless sleep!

It was a hot and slumbrous summer-noon,
 The sun was glaring like a pestilence
 Up in the sky, and over the lagoon
 No shadow fell. The kindled pile, from whence 40
 The smoke oozed out in breathings dark and dense,
 Threw a short shadow on the sand. Spellbound
 Was nature, and the quietude intense
 Broken but by the short and crackling sound,
 And one lone seabird's scream, that flew in circles round.

The master of the lyre stood near, his eye
 Wander'd, as when some doomed man doth read
 A prophet's warnings of calamity.
 And one was there, who leant his throbbing head
 Against a tree; his very heart did bleed 50
 Within him like a brother's.—Weep anew!
 God shield thy spirit in its hour of need,
 Thou persecuted man! for it is true,
 And just, and good, though some would pierce it through
 and through.

They scatter'd water from the silent sea,
 When that strange sacrifice had ceased to burn;
 And with slow hands they gather'd patiently
 The ashes in a white and sculptured urn:
 To no unholy chancel was it borne,
 Nor laid beneath the aisle of sacred dome— 60
 No! where the clouds might weep and breezes mourn,
 They dug midst ancient dust his narrow home,
 Where men of old were laid beneath the walls of Rome.

There, with the poets of another age,
 He sleeps the dreary night that hath no day.
 O! it were worth a long, long pilgrimage
 To kneel beside his tomb—to kneel and pray,
 Where prayer were passion!—Hath not sick decay
 Pass'd from him as from some embalmed saint?—
 Rouse thee, my heart, and thou shalt hence away, 70
 Freed from this dull and wearying constraint.
 And stand beside the shrine, so free from earthly taint.

Lo! from the Aventine, the charmed moon
 Shines through the columns rear'd into the night,
 And the low winds in their autumnal tune
 Waft the thin clouds, fringed with a watery white,
 Across her disk, obscuring half from sight
 The sleep-hush'd city. All beneath is dark,
 Save where a shifting and uncertain light,
 Far down upon the Tiber, serves to mark 80
 The slow and heedful course of some belated bark.

I stand without the old Romulean wall
 Amongst the tombs, and here my task is done;
 For, by the straggling gleams of light that fall
 Close by my feet, upon a carven stone,
 I read the epitaph, 'HERE LIETH ONE
 WHOSE NAME WAS WRIT IN WATER'. Child of fame!
 Thou who didst perish ere thy prize was won,
 False are those words—thy unforgotten name 89
 Is blotless, deathless now; 'tis writ in words of flame!

Do thou forgive me, that my feeble tongue,
 O Adonais! hath no other stave
 Tuned to thy memory, for thou wert sung
 By him, whose word is a proud charm to save
 From Lethe's waters.—Lo! upon thy grave
 The shadow of his stone streams deep athwart;¹
 Even as his spirit strove to shield and save
 Thy relics from the sharp and bitter dart,
 That fell like withering ice upon thy noble heart!

Above his ashes the light-feather'd grass 100
 Bends its tall head before the moaning wind
 That whispers by, as if the voice did pass
 Of some invisible and spirit mind;
 As when the sweet and lovelorn Syrinx pined
 Into the earth, the conscious reeds above
 Sigh'd with a music of no common kind;
 For the sick soul was ever near, and wove
 The sounds in thrilling notes, and every note was love!

There is a little hillock close beside,
 O'ergrown with scented weeds and blossoms wild; 110
 For here the gentle Earth dared not divide
 The stem and branch, the father and the child!
 Is not the tomb a chamber calm and mild,
 When sanctified by kindred sleep like this?—
 When love lies buried, and so undefiled,
 Is death not slumber, is not slumber bliss,
 A mirror of bright things where nought unholy is?

Ah! as the scented grass is fed with dew
 When morning enters on his glowing quest,
 As the sea-wearied mariner doth view 120
 His own loved shores throned in the golden west;
 So are such thoughts sweet visions of calm rest,
 To those who voyage on this dangerous stream
 Of life, where meditation is at best
 The faint cold solace of a fainting gleam,
 And when joy seems to smile, alas, it doth but seem!

Away unto thy task, my heart, away!
 Such words the coldly wise will laugh to scorn—
 Is thy dream past or broken? Lo! the day
 Across the purple mountain tops is borne; 130
 The silver mists are fading in the morn,
 The twitter of the birds is waking near
 Within the bosom of the scented thorn,
 And the wide river's coils are glancing clear—
 Away, my heart, away—why dost thou linger here?

¹ Keats, Shelley, and his infant child, are buried side by side.

O weary life! O unaccomplished joy!
 Where ev'n despair is faint, and meek, and mild—
 An early haunting care is with the boy,
 That never dull'd the forehead of the child;
 We journey on, till twenty years have piled 140
 Within the brain a heap of maxims sage,
 Then comes the struggle, selfish, stern, and wild;
 Gold is the only God, till heavy age
 Bows its hoar head to death—so ends our pilgrimage!—

The name is buried too, unless it live
 Link'd to the breathings of a godlike heart;
 Fame is the sole elixir, that can give
 Life and eternity! It is the part,
 Poet, that thou didst choose; within the mart
 Of this wide world that precious merchandise 150
 Is rarely sought or found.—Thou didst not start,
 Though malice, and the glare of envious eyes,
 And words of poison, are the meed of him who buys.

No monument was rear'd on Pompey's shrine,
 For shrine it surely is where heroes lie—
 Even so the tombstone that is rear'd on thine
 Is scarce a motto to thy memory;
 Dust will to dust, yet some things may not die;
 The songs of Grecian and of Roman time,
 And thine, and more, have pinions, and will fly 160
 Like eagles in their proud and glorious prime,
 Seen in their place of pride, yet far from earth and crime.

Thine eye was like thy heart—thou could'st not view
 The burdens under which we struggle on,
 And not lament; men blindly come and strew
 Thorns for our naked feet, and for their own;
 The earth sends up a universal groan
 Beneath its own oppression;—thou wert made
 For those bright ages that have long since gone,
 When love was virtue, virtue had no shade— 170
 Alas! that man's faint heart hath let those ages fade!

Thou wert a comet men beheld and wonder'd,
 Yet fear'd withal—thy very word was power;
 Thou spak'st of thunder, and, behold, it thunder'd!
 Thou spak'st of beauty, and a blushing shower,
 Like Danaë's gold within the brazen tower,
 Rain'd on our open hearts, until we felt,
 Beyond restraint, the spirit of the hour
 Moving around us, like the magic belt 179
 Wove by the Siren's song, that all it touch'd could melt.

Whence came the river of ethereal light,
 The Phlegethon of song, that from thy page
 Hath leapt, and lighted up the vale of night
 With clearer rays than ever ancient sage
 Wrung from his heart? Thou untaught Archimage
 Who hast decipher'd with the glance of youth
 The secret wisdom-tablets of all age
 Where didst thou gain such wond'rous power? In sooth,
 Leander was thy name, thy Hero's name was Truth!

She was the mark that led thee through the deep,
 To combat with the rude and boisterous waves, 191
 Most like the torch upon the Sestos steep
 Flicker'd afar her light. Ah, we are slaves
 That may not burst our chain! The yawning graves
 Are open for us, and we cannot find
 That which we seek; doubts rise, and passion raves
 Around our heads, before us and behind,
 And then our guiding flame is scatter'd by the wind.

O, ye faint echoes of a still-born sigh!
 O, loosen'd murmurs of an early string! 200
 O, thou most sad, most dull monotony
 Of untimed song, that from the spirit's spring
 Chimes in such drowsy fall, amongst a ring
 Of unshorn margin-thoughts! what envious thrall
 Checks your concordance with his heavy wing?
 Why are ye thus so thrilless—one and all
 So slumbrous in your rise, so falter'd in your fall?

It is because the rapid inward river
 Hath other utterance than in tears and words,—
 Because the spirit breeze will pant and quiver 210
 With thoughts that dare not stir the Atolian chords,
 Because the unspeaking soul hath other lords,
 And other masters than thought-wrestling lips,—
 Because the tongue no other aid affords
 Than the sea-murmurs to the calmed ships,
 Or earth's distracted sigh unto the charm'd eclipse!

Come, then, ye weary children of my brain,
 And back unto your silent home return;
 There keep your patient watch in tranced pain
 Around the image of the poet's urn;
 Gaze on his light that evermore doth spurn 220
 The darkness from its halo, gaze your fill;
 A fire like his, when lighted up, shall burn
 Still unextinguish'd, and triumphant still,
 A startling beacon-blaze upon a lonely hill!

APPENDIX I

APPENDIX TO 'LAYS OF THE SCOTTISH
CAVALIERS'

[First appeared in Second Edition, 1849]

EXAMINATION OF THE STATEMENTS IN MR. MACAULAY'S
HISTORY OF ENGLAND, REGARDING JOHN GRAHAME
OF CLAVERHOUSE, VISCOUNT OF DUNDEE.*'Discarding modern historians, who in too many instances do not seem
to entertain the slightest scruple in¹ dealing with the memory of the dead.'*
Preface to BURIAL-MARCH OF DUNDEE—P. 88.

SINCE the first edition of this volume was published, Mr. Macaulay's long-promised History of England has been given to the public. Without wishing in any way to detract from the general merits of a work which has already attained so great popularity, but, on the contrary, acknowledging with gratitude the delight I have received from its perusal, I must take the liberty of challenging its accuracy with regard to many of the details referring to Scottish events, more especially those connected with the proceedings which were instituted against the Covenanters. With the political conclusions drawn by the learned and accomplished author, I have of course nothing to do: these fall within the sphere of private judgment; and though I differ from him very largely in his estimate both of men and measures, I am not entitled to enter into such an argument. But the facts set forth by an historian are public property, and I shall now proceed to examine the charges which Mr. Macaulay has brought against Lord Dundee, and the authorities upon which those charges have been founded.

With reference to the proceedings in the west of Scotland, during the year 1685, Mr. Macaulay says: 'Those shires in which the Covenanters were most numerous were given up to the licence of the army. With the army was mingled a militia, composed of the most violent and profligate of those who called themselves Episcopalians. Pre-eminent among the bands which oppressed and wasted these unhappy districts were the dragoons commanded by James Graham of Claverhouse. The story ran that these wicked men used in their revels to play at the torments of hell, and to call each other by the names of devils and damned souls. The chief of this Tophet on earth, a soldier of distinguished

¹ in] whilst 1849²

courage and professional skill, but rapacious and profane, of violent temper and of obdurate heart, has left a name which, wherever the Scottish race is settled on the face of the globe, is mentioned with a peculiar energy of hatred.'

These are hard words: let us now see how they are justified. The name which has been left by 'the chief of this Tophet on earth' is at all events not that which has been set forth by Mr. Macaulay in his History. There never was any such person as *James Graham* of Claverhouse. We know indeed of one *James Grahame* who was conspicuous in Scottish history, and his name has ere now been exposed to as much calumny and vituperation as is still lavished on his gallant relative; but loyalists venerate him as the great Marquis of Montrose. *JOHN GRAHAME* of Claverhouse we know also, and men speak of him as the Viscount of Dundee. But of Mr. Macaulay's *James Graham* we know nothing; neither has that name, as applied to Claverhouse, a place in any accredited history save his own.

It may appear trivial to insist upon a mistake, which, however, has been perpetuated through several editions; but it is not without its importance. No man really familiar with the history of Scotland could have committed such a blunder; he might just as well have talked of the good Sir Joshua of Douglas, or of Tobias Randolph, Earl of Moray. And, therefore, in repeated instances, when Scotland or the Scots are mentioned, we find Mr. Macaulay's assertions at variance with the ordinary records of history. Take, for example, his statement that 'the Scottish people' had 'butchered their first James in his bedchamber,' which is just about as correct as if we were to say that the people of France butchered Henry IV, because that monarch was assassinated by Ravillac, or that the British nation approves of regicide because a maniac has fired at the Queen! Surely Mr. Macaulay, before exerting his rhetoric to blacken the character of so eminent a personage as Lord Dundee, might have taken the trouble to consult some record of the peerage for his name.

Mr. Macaulay is pleased to stigmatise Claverhouse by using the epithet 'rapacious'. This is altogether a new charge, and for it he has not vouchsafed the slightest authority. Cruel, bloody, and profane are epithets with which we are familiar; writers on the Covenanting side have used them over and over again; and if the narratives upon which they proceed, and which many of them conscientiously believe, were authenticated, they are unquestionably justified in doing so. But rapacity is, I repeat, a new charge. The worst foe of Claverhouse never yet hinted that there was anything mean or sordid in his disposition. No instance of

bribery can be alleged against him ; he levied no contributions ; and with every opportunity within his reach of amassing a large fortune, he died in comparative poverty. I am certain that no man really acquainted with Scottish history, whatever be his political or traditional opinions, will gainsay me in this ; and as this particular charge has been brought forward without a shadow of authority to support it, I can only express my regret that an author who can write so well should be so reckless in the choice of his epithets.

The 'profanity' imputed to Claverhouse deserves a few words. So far as I can discover, the charge is founded upon certain expressions said to have been used by him immediately after John Brown, the carrier of Priestfield, was shot. If used, the charge is amply proven. I shall presently have occasion to consider the historical vouchers for this remarkable story, upon which so great stress has been laid, and to state my grounds for maintaining that it is utterly unworthy of credence. In the mean time, and as to the general charge, I shall content myself by quoting the words of a witness who was personally acquainted with Dundee, and whose testimony is liable to no other exception, save what may be cast upon him in his capacity of a gentleman and a Jacobite. 'His Lordship was so nice in point of honour, and so true to his word, that he never was known once to break it. From this exactness it was that he once lost the opportunity of an easy victory over Mackay in Strathspey, by dismissing Captain Forbes ; who, meeting the two troopers sent by the Lord Kilsyth, not only discovered that intelligence, but the neighbourhood of the Highland army, as I have formerly related. This is the only real error chargeable in his conduct, while he commanded in this war. But this is the more excusable, that it proceeded from a principle of religion, whereof he was strictly observant ; for, besides family worship performed regularly evening and morning at his house, he retired to his closet at certain hours and employed himself in that duty. This I affirm upon the testimony of several that lived in his neighbourhood in Edinburgh, where his office of Privy Councillor often obliged him to be ; and particularly from a Presbyterian lady who lived long in the storey or house immediately below his Lordship's, and who was otherwise so rigid in her opinions that she could not believe a good thing of any person of his persuasion, till his conduct rectified her mistake.'¹

As for the general morality of the dragoons, I do not feel myself called upon to prove that they were faultless patterns of virtue. I shall not aver, as Mr. Macaulay has done of the Puritans, 'that in that singular camp, no riot was heard, no

¹ *Memoirs of Sir Ewen Cameron of Lochell.*

drunkenness or gambling was seen'. I believe that austerity was never yet the prevailing characteristic of any barrack, and I should be sorry to overstate my case by random laudations even of the Scottish Life-Guards. But when we are gravely told that these soldiers 'used in their revels to play at the torments of hell, and to call each other by the names of devils and damned souls', one's¹ curiosity is certainly excited. The pastime is fortunately not a common one; it was not recommended in the Book of Sports, which gave such exceeding offence to the Puritans: and the nomenclature alleged to be employed would imply an intimate knowledge of Demonology far from usual with the soldiery of that period. I look to Mr. Macaulay's note for his authority, and I find it appended in the shape of the venerated name of Wodrow.

English readers can hardly be supposed to know what manner of man this Wodrow was, whom, in preference to any other chronicler, Mr. Macaulay has thought fit to follow with reference to that period of Scottish history. It may therefore be proper, very shortly, to give a brief account of his writings, style, notions, and credibility.

Robert Wodrow, minister at Eastwood, is tolerably well known to Scottish antiquaries as the author of two works—the *History of the Church of Scotland*, and the *Analecta, or Materials for a History of Remarkable Providences, mostly relating to Scotch Ministers and Christians*. He was born in 1679, was consequently a mere child at the time of the Revolution, and gave his History to the world in 1721. That History, according to his own account, was compiled partly from existing documents, and partly from the narrative of persons who had orally communicated with the author; and a most extraordinary history it is, in every sense of the word.

Born in a credulous age, Wodrow was endowed with a power of credulity which altogether transcended bounds. He has not unaptly been styled the Scottish Aubrey, though Aubrey by the side of Wodrow would almost appear a sceptic. The Romish miracles sink into insignificance compared with those recorded by Mr. Macaulay's pet authority. But for the numerous, though possibly unintentional profanities, and the grossness of some of the anecdotes which are scattered over its pages, the *Analecta* would be pleasant reading. We learn from Wodrow how Elizabeth Kennedy, sister to Hugh Kennedy, Provost of Ayr, being extremely ill of stone, declined submitting to a surgical operation, and how the calculus was miraculously dissolved at the intercession of a prayer-meeting assembled in her house. We read of corpses sitting up in bed, announcing to the terrified mourners the judgments of another world; of Mr. John Campbell of Craigie, minister, who had an interview with the devil,

¹ one's] my 1810²

not, however, unprofitably, for he thereby escaped eating a poisoned hen for supper; of rats which were sent as special warnings to the Reverend Mr. David Williamson; of the ghost of a barber which appeared to the Reverend Mr. William Leslie; of a gifted horse in Annandale, which could cure the king's evil; and of a thousand similar instances of ludicrous superstition. These anecdotes are not confined to private individuals—for persons of note and name are made to figure in the pages of Wodrow. Take as an example the following *morceau* of history, gravely narrated of Archbishop Sharpe: 'At another time, Archbishop Sharpe, presiding in the Privy Council, was earnest to have Janet Douglas brought before that board, accusing her of sorcery and witchcraft. When she was brought, she vindicated herself of that alleged crime; declaring, though she knew very well who were witches, yet she was not one herself, for she was endeavouring to discover those secret hellish plots, and to countermine the kingdom of darkness. The Archbishop insisted she might be sent away to the King's plantations in the West Indies. She only dropt one word to the Bishop:—"My Lord," says she, "who was you with in your closet on Saturday night last, betwixt twelve and one o'clock?" upon which the Bishop changed his countenance, and turned black and pale, and then no more was said. When the Council rose up, the Duke of Rothes called Janet into a room, and inquired at her privately "who that person was that was with the Bishop?" She refused at first; but he promising upon his word of honour to warrant her at all hands, and that she should not be sent to America, she says, "My Lord, it was the meikle black devil!"'

This is in reality a mild specimen of Wodrow; but it may suffice to show the mental constitution of the man. Against his fairness I shall make no charge, though Mr. Kirkpatrick Sharpe, in his notes appended to Kirkton's History, has, I think, incontestably shown, from Wodrow's existing manuscripts, that he purposely garbled, or at least omitted to quote, such parts of the correspondence of the Archbishop of St. Andrews as would have effectually refuted some of the calumnies then current against that unfortunate prelate. At present, I merely look to Wodrow as Mr. Macaulay's informant; and I find, on referring to the History, that the following passage is founded on. 'Dreadful,' says Wodrow, 'were the acts of wickedness done by the soldiers at this time, and Lagg was as deep as any. They used to take to themselves in their cabals the names of devils, and persons they supposed to be in hell, and with whips to lash one another as a jest upon hell. But I shall draw a veil over many of their dreadful impieties I meet

¹ So in all editions; *qy.* read 'what'—Ed.

with in papers written at this time !' It is hardly worth while to remark that this passage does not, in the slightest degree, refer to the troops under the command of Claverhouse, but to the militia or local force which was raised by Grierson of Lagg. This story is specially told of Grierson by Howie in *Biographia Scoticana*—a work to which I allude simply for the purpose of showing against whom the legend was directed. For any authentic historical information we shall search that Apocrypha in vain. So much for Mr. Macaulay's accuracy in applying the materials of his veracious authority; but surely the absurdity of such stuff renders refutation unnecessary? Mr. Macaulay, however, goes beyond Wodrow, even in minuteness, for in a subsequent paragraph he particularises the very names which were used, as those of Beelzebub and Apollyon ! He might with equal propriety have adopted the phraseology of Ancient Pistol, and gravely informed us that the Scottish mode of military accost was, 'How now, Mephostophilus ?'¹

We next arrive at the story of John Brown, which I am particularly anxious to expiscate. This tale is usually brought forward as the crowning instance of the cruelty of Claverhouse; it has repeatedly formed the subject of romance and illustration; and authors of no mean power have vied with each other in heightening the horror of its details. Some of the grosser fables regarding that disturbed period have lost their hold of the popular belief—for exaggeration may sometimes be carried so far as entirely to neutralise its purpose. But the Priestfield tragedy is still an article of the peasant's creed; and, as it has hitherto been allowed to pass without examination, it has furnished an overwhelming reply to those who deny the authenticity of the mass of Covenantanting tradition. I am not ashamed to own that I have a deep regard for the memory of Lord Dundee—a regard founded on a firm belief in his public and private virtues, his high and chivalrous honour, and his unshaken loyalty to his sovereign. But those feelings, however strong, would never lead me to vindicate an action of wanton and barbarous cruelty, or even attempt to lessen the stigma by a frivolous or dishonest excuse. No cause was ever effectually served by mean evasion, any more than it can be promoted by unblushing exaggeration or by gross perversion of facts. The charge has been distinctly made, and I now propose to examine the authority upon which it is founded, as gravely and minutely as though it concerned the character of the living, and not merely the memory of the dead. Mr. Macaulay shall speak for himself:—

'John Brown, a poor carrier of Lanarkshire, was, for his singular piety, commonly called the Christian carrier.

¹ Mephostophilus] Mephistophilus 1849², 1853

Many years later, when Scotland enjoyed rest, prosperity, and religious freedom, old men, who remembered the evil days, described him as one versed in divine things, blameless in life, and so peaceable that the tyrants could find no offence in him, except that he absented himself from the public worship of the Episcopalians. On the first of May he was cutting turf, when he was seized by Claverhouse's dragoons, rapidly examined, convicted of non-conformity, and sentenced to death. It is said that even among the soldiers it was not easy to find an executioner, for the wife of the poor man was present. She led one little child by the hand; it was easy to see that she was about to give birth to another; and even those wild and hard-hearted men, who nicknamed one another Beelzebub and Apollyon, shrank from the great wickedness of butchering her husband before her face. The prisoner meanwhile, raised above himself by the near prospect of eternity, prayed loud and fervently as one inspired, till Claverhouse, in a fury, shot him dead. It was reported by credible witnesses that the widow cried out in her agony—"Well, sir, well; the day of reckoning will come"; and that the murderer replied—"To man I can answer for what I have done; and as for God, I will take him into my own hand". Yet it was rumoured that even on his seared conscience and adamant heart the dying ejaculations of his victim made an impression that never was effaced.

Such is Mr. Macaulay's statement—well-written, simple, and affecting. Wodrow is the sole authority upon which he founds his narrative, and it is fair to say that he has deviated but slightly from that chronicle, except in one material point. *Wodrow does not profess to specify upon what charge Brown was examined and condemned.* When Mr. Macaulay says that he was 'convicted of non-conformity', he speaks without any text; and I shall presently have occasion to show that his assumption is radically wrong. But, as he substantially adopts the tale of Wodrow, it is necessary to go back to that writer's sources of information.

The execution of John Brown is said to have taken place on the 1st May 1685. The Revolution occurred in 1688; and Lord Dundee fell at Killiecrankie on the 27th July 1689. Wodrow's History was first published in 1721, exactly *thirty-six years after the alleged murder.*

These dates are of the utmost importance in considering a matter of this kind. The Episcopalian party, which adhered to the cause of King James, was driven from power at the Revolution, and the Episcopal Church proscribed. No mercy was shown to opponents in the literary war which followed: every species of invective and vituperation was lavished upon the supporters of the fallen dynasty. *Yet, for thirty-three years after the Revolution, the details of this atrocious murder were never revealed to the public!* Nowhere in print

or pamphlet, memoir, history, or declaration, published previously to Wodrow, does even the name of John Brown occur, save once, in the *Cloud of Witnesses*, a work which appeared in 1714; and in that work no details are given, the narrative being comprehended in a couple of lines. I have searched for it amidst all the records of the so-called martyrology, but cannot find a trace of it elsewhere, until the Reverend Robert Wodrow thought fit to place the tale, with all its circumstantiality, in his History. How, then, came Wodrow to know anything about the murder of John Brown? He could have had no personal knowledge or recollection of the circumstance, for he was not quite six years of age at the time when it is said to have occurred. He has not offered one scrap of evidence in support of his allegation, and merely leaves it to be inferred that he had derived the story from that most uncertain of all sources, tradition. Even at the hands of the most honest, cautious, and scrupulous chronicler, we should hesitate to receive a tale of this kind; but from Wodrow, who is certainly entitled to claim none of the above adjectives as applicable to himself, who will take it? No one, I should hope, whose prejudice is not so strong as to lead him to disregard the most ordinary verification of evidence. Claverhouse had enemies enough to insure the circulation of such a damning tale, supposing it to have been true, long before he had lain for two-and-thirty years in his grave. He was not without eulogists, whose tribute to his memory was as gall and wormwood to their opponents, and in whose teeth, most assuredly, the details of such a dastardly and unprovoked murder would have been cast. Yet no man charged him with it. More than a generation passed away—the two Kingdoms had been united, and Mar's insurrection quelled, before the miracle-mongering minister of Eastwood ventured, upon no documentary authority at all, to concoct and publish the story which Mr. Macaulay has adopted without a scruple.

After what I have said, it may fairly be asked, whether the whole of this story should be considered a mere myth or fable hatched from the brain, or palmed upon the easy credulity, of Robert Wodrow, or whether there are any grounds for believing that it is at least founded upon fact? To this I should reply, that, from other testimony, the character and complexion of which I shall immediately analyse, it appears to be true that John Brown of Priestfield, or Priesthill, did actually suffer by military execution, but that the same testimony utterly contradicts Wodrow, and his follower, Mr. Macaulay, in every important particular relative to the details. Mr. Macaulay may not have known that such testimony ever existed, for even the most painstaking historian is sure to pass over some material in so wide a field; nevertheless, since the point has been mooted, it

may be a satisfaction to him to learn that his version of the story has long ago been repudiated in *essentialibus* by the most popular work that ever emanated from the Covenanting printing-press.

Patrick Walker, packman, and publisher at the Bristo Port of Edinburgh, was concerned at a very early age in the Scottish troubles. In 1682, he and two other Covenanters were present at the death of one Francis¹ Gordon, a volunteer in the Earl of Airlie's troop, who, it seems, was shot through the head. Walker, in his own account of this exploit, first published in 1727, cautiously abstains from indicating the exact perpetrator of the deed, but leaves the glory thereof to be shared among the triumvirate. The sum of his confession amounts simply to this—that he, Gordon, 'got a shot in his head out of a pocket-pistol, rather fit for diverting a boy, than killing such a furious, mad, brisk man; which, notwithstanding, killed him dead'. He was, moreover, says Walker, 'seeking his own death, and got it'. For this affair Walker was imprisoned, and sentenced to transportation, but made his escape, and, after various vicissitudes, set himself down in his old age to compile the *Memoirs of the Covenanters*. The first of these tracts did not appear until after Wodrow's *History* was published, and intense is the contempt expressed by the persecuted packman for the slip-slop of the fair-weather minister, whom he accuses of positive dishonesty. 'I wish him,' says Walker, in his *Vindication of Cameron*, 'repentance and forgiveness for what unaccountable wrongs he has done by his pen to the Testimony, and to the names of Christ's slain witnesses for the same. For myself I am easy; my tongue is yet in my head, and my pen in my hand; and what I have to say upon that head for myself, and those with me, will run faster and further than he has feet to go. I am reflected upon for my not giving Mr. Wodrow better information. *Answer*.—Before his *History* came out, when I heard of his manuscripts going from hand to hand among the Longheads (I knew it would be patched up according to the backsliding spirit of the day), I desired the Rev. Mr. James Webster to give me account when he came to his house, that I might have a short conversation with him. Mrs. Webster told him my desire. He answered, he depended on the records of that time.' In the same work he characterises Wodrow's statements as 'lies and groundless stories'; and, moreover, piously expresses a wish 'that Mr. Wodrow's well-wishers would pray for him, that he may come to himself and be of a right mind, who has been so lavish of his misrepresentations and groundless reflections'. Such is Walker's opinion of the authenticity of Wodrow's *History*, though his remarks are of course principally directed

¹ Francis] James 1849²

to misrepresentations of the champions of the Covenant. But they are useful as showing his impression of the intrinsic value of the work.

Walker's best and earliest tract is the *Life of Peden*. This originally appeared in 1724, and is still widely circulated among the peasantry of Scotland. It is a strange mixture of earnestness and superstition; sometimes rugged and even coarse in its style, and yet at times rising to a point of real though homely pathos. Peden, the subject of the memoir, was an intercommuned minister, whom the Covenanters asserted to have been endowed with miraculous prophetic powers. He was concerned in the insurrection of Pentland, and sentenced to banishment, but liberated by the leniency of the Government; notwithstanding which, he relapsed into his old courses, became the active agent of rebellion, and so notorious that he was expressly marked for capture. Of his frequent interviews with the devil, his gifts of second-sight and divination, and his power of casting out unclean spirits, I shall say nothing here. Walker faithfully records at least a hundred such instances, which are sufficient to entitle Peden to take rank beside Apollonius of Tyana. He appears, however, in actual flesh and blood connected with the tragedy of John Brown.

Walker's narrative commences thus:—‘In the beginning of May 1685, he (Peden) came to the house of John Brown and Isobel Weir, whom he had married before he last went to Ireland, where he stayed all night; and in the morning, when he took his farewell, he came out at the door, saying to himself, “Poor woman, a fearful morning,” twice over—“a dark misty morning!” The next morning, between five and six hours, the said John Brown, having performed the worship of God in his family, was going with a spade in his hand to make ready some peat ground, the mist being very dark, knew not until bloody cruel Claverhouse compassed him with three troops of horses, brought him to his house, and there examined him.’ Walker, like Wodrow, is silent as to the nature of the charge. Then comes the sentence—‘his wife standing by with her child in her arms, that she had brought forth to him, and another child of his first wife’s’; and the execution is thus narrated—‘Claverhouse ordered six soldiers to shoot him; the most part of the bullets came upon his head, which scattered his brains upon the ground.’

Such is Walker's account of the matter, forty years having in the mean time intervened; and whether strictly correct or no, it entirely alters the complexion of the case as stated by Mr. Macaulay. Instead of John Brown being one ‘in whom the tyrants could find no offence except that he absented himself from the public worship of the Episcopalians’, we find him in intercourse with a man who, whatever

might be his spiritual gifts, was a notorious outlaw and a rebel; the whole romance about the reluctance of the soldiers vanishes; the 'wild and hard-hearted men' are at once amenable to the authority of their commanding officer; and the alleged murder dwindles into a case of military execution.

Of the two histories, that of Walker is unquestionably most likely to resemble the truth. He professes to have heard some of the details from the wife of Brown, whereas Wodrow gives us no manner of authority at all. There are, however, suspicious circumstances even in Walker's narrative, which might be noticed. For example, in the original edition of his pamphlet, he states that the first person who came to Mrs. Brown, whilst she was watching by her husband's body, was 'that old singular Christian woman in the Cumberhead, named Elizabeth Menzies, three miles distant'; but in the third edition, this matron, retaining her residence and encomium, is transmuted into 'Jean Brown'. Surely these two cannot signify one and the same person, and we are therefore left in doubt which particular female was the witness. But it is not worth while going into minute criticism. Walker, who was a far more determined Covenanter than Wodrow, was not likely to have understated the circumstances, neither does he profess to know upon what charge Brown was examined. I think, however, I can throw some light upon this person's political delinquencies: and, strangely enough, my authority is derived from an official document which will be found in the Appendix to Wodrow.

'John Brown of Priestfield, in the parish of Muirkirk',¹ figures in the list of fugitives appended to the Royal Proclamation of 5th May 1684. The list is of those who had been regularly cited as rebels in arms, or resettlers of rebels, but who had failed to appear. John Brown, therefore, had been outlawed a year before his death, and certainly for a very different offence than that of 'absenting himself from the public worship of the Episcopalians'. Undoubtedly it was considered, in the eye of the law, an offence to attend armed conventicles, where fanatical and intercommuned preachers wrested texts from Scripture into encomiums on sedition, treason, and murder: that, however, was a very different thing from non-attendance upon the curate. Wodrow acknowledges that Brown 'had been a long time upon his hiding in the fields', a circumstance surely irreconcilable

¹ In order that there may be no cavilling about the identity of the name or designation (for the place of Brown's residence has been variously printed as 'Priestfield', 'Priesthill', and 'the Preshill'), I subjoin the exact words of Wodrow, in his account of the execution. 'I may well begin with the horrid murder of that excellent person, *John Brown of Priestfield*, in the parish of *Muirkirk*, by *Claverhouse*, the first of this month.'

with his entire consciousness of innocence, but easily explained on the ground that he was already a rebel and an outlaw. To say that he was tried and sentenced for non-conformity is to hazard an assertion not only without foundation, but in the very teeth of history. I maintain—and I know that I am borne out by incontrovertible proof—that, at the time in question, there was no manner of persecution exercised in Scotland against any body of men whatever, on account of their religious tenets.

Mr. Macaulay, whilst dilating upon the harsh usage of the Covenanters, never once affords us a glimpse of the opposite side of the picture. His object is to show that James VII, immediately on his accession to the throne, commenced a relentless religious persecution; and accordingly, he ignores the position of affairs in Scotland during the last six months of the reign of Charles II. I have examined very minutely the original records of the Privy Council preserved in the public archives of Edinburgh, and these, taken in connection with Fountainhall's explanatory *Diaries*, furnish ample proof that the charges brought against King James are without foundation. I propose very shortly to inquire into this matter.

Charles II died 6th February 1685. Let us see what was the state of the kingdom towards the close of the preceding year.

In September 1684, the southern and western shires were so turbulent that the Privy Council found it necessary to issue four special commissions of Justiciary for those districts alone. 'In the month of June last,' says the Royal Proclamation of 22d July, 'about two hundred armed rebels have presumed, to the great contempt of our authority, to march openly through several of the said shires for many days together, threatening the orthodox clergy and murdering our soldiers; and have at last, when they found it convenient, disappeared, being certainly and undeniably reset by the inhabitants of those shires, without sufficient diligence done by the sheriffs and inhabitants of the said shires, either for dissipating them, or for discovering their resettlers, and bringing them to justice.' How far those special commissions succeeded in repressing crime may be judged of by the following events:—

'20th Nov. 1684.—The news came this morning to Edinburgh that some of the desperate phanatiques had last night fallen upon two of the King's Life-guards, viz. Thomas Kennoway and Duncan Stewart, who were lying at the Swyn Abbay, beyond Blackburn, in Linlithgowshire, and murdered them most barbarously. This was to execute what they had threatened in their declaration of war.'

'12th Dec. 1684.—News came to the Privy Council that the wild phanatiques had fallen in upon one Peirson, minister

at Carsphairn in Galloway, a great dilator of them, and zealous of rebuking them in his sermons, and killed him. They ridiculously keep mock courts of justice, and cite any they judge their inveterate enemies to them; and read probation, and condemn them, and thereafter murder them.¹

Some of the murderers of Mr. Peirson were afterwards taken and shot. They also have been elevated to the rank of martyrs. The epitaph of one of them, Robert Mitchell, is printed among the inscriptions at the conclusion of the *Cloud of Witnesses*.

On the 28th of January thereafter, the Privy Council was informed that Captain Urquhart, and several of his men, had been waylaid and murdered in Wigtownshire.²

These specimens may serve to show the temper, of the Covenanters about the close of 1684. Next, as to the alleged fiery persecutions of James, 'which', says Mr. Macaulay, 'waxed hotter than ever from the day on which he became sovereign.' That day was the 6th of February, and on the 26th of the same month he issued a *full pardon and indemnity* to all offenders below the rank of heritors (with the exception only of those who were actually guilty of the murders of Archbishop Sharpe, Mr. Peirson, and two others), and that clogged with no other condition than the taking of the oath of allegiance. The proclamation was published on the 2d of March, and on the 14th the Privy Council ordered all prisoners whatsoever to be set at liberty, 'upon their abjuring the fanatical declaration of war, and likewise solemnly giving their oaths never to rise against his Majesty or his authority'. Surely never yet was persecution inaugurated by such liberal measures as these! It is right to observe, that the reader will fail to discover the smallest mention of them in the pages of Mr. Macaulay.

In less than ten days after this³ jail-delivery, the disturbances began anew. On the 24th of March, 'the Lords of his Majesty's Privy Council being certainly informed that a number of desperate rebels have the boldness and confidence openly to go up and down the shire of Ayr, and other adjacent shires and places, and to enter houses, take away arms and provisions at their pleasure, without any notice taken of them either by the heritors or commons, to the great affront of his Majesty's authority', commissioned Colonel James Douglas to proceed to the disaffected districts, with full powers to repress the disorders. The commission was signed on the 27th by the whole members of the Privy Council who were present, 'except Claverhouse'—a remarkable exception, specially noted, to which I shall presently

¹ Fountainhall's *Historical Notices*.

² *Records of the Privy Council* in General Record Office, Edinburgh.

³ this] the 1849²

refer. Of the same date, a letter from the Privy Council was forwarded to the Earl of Dumfries, sheriff of Ayr, requesting immediate particulars, as it appeared that his lordship's house had been one of those which were ransacked.

Douglas seems to have entered into his functions with zeal, but not to have been altogether successful. The insurrection continued to increase, and on the 21st April, General-Lieutenant Drummond, Master-General of the Ordnance, was appointed Commissioner and Justiciar in the southern and western shires, with plenary powers. The Parliament of Scotland did not meet until two days afterwards.

These insurrections had their origin in a deeper cause than religious dissent or local turbulence. Mr. Macaulay, who confidently says that 'there was no insurrection in any part of our island on the 1st May', probably considering the Ayrshire rising as a mere sportive demonstration—has a note in refutation of the editor of the Oxford edition of Burnet, who supposes that John Brown might have been mixed up with the designs of Argyle. He says that Argyle was at that date in Holland. True; *but he sailed for Scotland on the 2d*, and the Privy Council had been aware of his designs as early as the 21st April. On that day they ordered 1200 Highlanders to be sent into the western shires, 'upon rumours of fears of Argyle's landing'; and Drummond, in his commission, was empowered to take those Highlanders under his command. On the 28th, an Act was framed for putting the whole kingdom in a posture of defence, expressly on account of Argyle; and on the last of that month, John Campbell of Succo was arrested for treasonable correspondence with that infatuated nobleman. Nor can there be a shadow of a doubt that the disturbances in the west were connected with the meditated landing.

Is, then, the conjecture of the editor of Burnet so exceedingly extravagant? I do not think so. How came John Brown, as Wodrow says, to have been 'a long time upon his hiding in the fields'? He was free by the indemnity, unless, indeed, he had refused the oath of allegiance, or committed some subsequent act which put him beyond the pale of the law. In the report of a committee of the Privy Council, made on the 10th of March, I find the following entry:—'John Brown, an old man, in the fugitive roll, refuses the allegiance, and so ought not to have the benefit of the indemnity'. If this be the same person with the carrier of Priestfield, he was at that time a prisoner, and therefore must either have made his escape, or, having taken the oath, subsequently joined the rebels; in either of which cases his hiding in the fields is intelligible enough, and so also is his summary execution when arrested. But in no way can it be shown that he suffered on account of

his religious tenets; and it is very well worthy of observation that the act against Conventicles, which has been so much abused, was not passed by the Scottish Parliament until several days after the date in question. Let the candid and impartial reader compare these dates, circumstances, and evidences, with the narrative of Mr. Macaulay, and I have little fear of his arriving at the same conclusions with that eloquent historian.

It seems to me, therefore, quite clear that John Brown was executed as a rebel. He may be considered a martyr in the same sense as Hackstoun of Rathillet and Robert Mitchell, who had imbrued their hands in the blood of the Primate of St. Andrews and of the minister of Carsphairn, or as the rebels who adhered to the atrocious Declaration of Sanquhar; but I cannot see what other claim he has to the title. He was fugitated the year before; he had either refused or had forfeited the benefit of the indemnity; he was trafficking with a notorious outlaw; and he is admitted to have been in hiding within six weeks after the indemnity was proclaimed. All this, at least, is patent and proven; and it is utterly inconsistent with his innocence, even if we should stretch charity so far as to suppose that, during those six weeks, he did not join one of those armed bands of rebels who were then perambulating and plundering the country. The aggravations, which constitute the romance of the story, have been already disposed of. Patrick Walker, the stancher Cameronian of the two, gives Robert Wodrow the lie direct.

This note has already extended to such a length that I am really unwilling to add a word more on the subject. But the duty which I have undertaken compels me to state my belief that Grahame of Claverhouse had no share whatever in repressing the disturbances previous to the landing of Argyle, and that he was not present at the execution of John Brown. Tradition of course is against me; but when I find no articulate voice uttered by tradition until after the expiry of thirty years, I am not disposed to give much weight to it as an accessory, far less to accept it as reasonable evidence. My reasons are as follows:—

Claverhouse was superseded in his military command by Colonel James Douglas, brother of Queensberry, who was then High Treasurer. The district assigned to Douglas was that of Ayr, the shire in which John Brown resided; and Claverhouse, being of equal military rank, did not serve under him, as is apparent from the records of the Privy Council, the meetings of which he attended daily until the month of April. These records refute many of the scandalous tales propagated by Crookshank and others, who depict Claverhouse as pursuing Covenanters in Nithsdale, at the very moment when he was performing his duties as a

councillor in Edinburgh. Fountainhall tells us distinctly that he was superseded out of spite: he refused, in his character of Privy Councillor, to sign the commission, and in April he was actually omitted from the new list of councillors. The following is Fountainhall's entry on that occasion:—'9th April 1685.—A Privy Council¹ is held where a new commission is produced, omitting none of the former Privy Councillors² but only Colonel Grahame of Claverhouse, because of the discords we have formerly marked between him and the High Treasurer and his brother. The pretence was, that, being married in my Lord Dundonald's phanatique family, it was not safe to commit the King's secrets to him.' The spite went even further: for a few days afterwards an Act of Council was passed, says Fountainhall, 'in odium of Claverhouse'; and I cannot find, in the records of that year, the slightest trace of his having been reinstated in command. It is possible, however, that he might have been called out to serve under General Drummond, but not surely upon such duty as this. John Brown must have been a very desperate rebel indeed, if a Colonel of the Guards, who moreover had been a Privy Councillor, and three troops of horse, were despatched specially to arrest him! If he was no rebel at all, but merely a nonconformist, the thing becomes absolutely incredible; for, setting aside the Indemnity, can any one believe that, in the face of Argyle's meditated landing, and in the midst of actual insurrection, the troops were leisurely employed in ferreting out and shooting such of the peasantry as did not worship with the curates? But vulgar credulity owns no limits, and the lapse of thirty years is sufficient to account for the currency of the grossest fable.

In estimating the character of the dead, some weight surely ought to be given to the opinions of contemporaries. I shall cite merely one—that of Dr. Monro, the Principal of the University of Edinburgh. At the inquiry instituted before the Visitors in 1690, it was alleged, as a special article of dittay against the Reverend Principal, that he had rejoiced at the victory of Lord Dundee. After calling upon his accuser for proofs, the Doctor thus boldly expressed himself:—'The libeller does not think I rejoiced at the fall of my Lord Dundee! I assure him of the contrary; for no gentleman, soldier, scholar, or civilised citizen, will find fault with me for this. I had an extraordinary value for him; and such of his enemies as retain any generosity will acknowledge he deserved it.'³ But what generosity, or even what regard

¹ Council] Counsell 1849² ² Councillors] Counsellors 1849², 1853

³ *Presbyterian Inquisition; as it was lately practised against the Professors of the College of Edinburgh.* Aug. and Sept. 1690. Licensed Nov. 12, 1691. London.

for truth, could be expected from creatures of the stamp of Wodrow!

Mr. Macaulay is peculiarly unfortunate on the subject of Claverhouse. I say nothing of omissions, though I must take the liberty, with all deference, of remarking that it does appear somewhat strange to find in a history, which recounts with such minute satisfaction every instance of desertion from the losing¹ side, no notice taken of the loyalty of those who remained steadfast to their oath and their allegiance. In an impartial narrative, one might expect to see recorded the gallant advice and chivalrous offer made by Lord Dundee to his sovereign, before the latter quitted his dominions; for surely devotion to a losing cause is worthy of honour and respect, and should receive it from a generous antagonist. But historians undoubtedly have the privilege of omitting what they please, and, in this instance, it is sufficient to note that the privilege has been exercised. But Mr. Macaulay has thought fit to introduce Claverhouse once more as an actor in an historical scene, upon which he has obviously bestowed much pains and consideration. In his account of the capture and execution of Argyle, he says:—*'The victorious party had not forgotten that, thirty-five years before this time, the father of Argyle had been at the head of the faction which put Montrose to death. Before that event, the houses of Graham and Campbell had borne no love to each other, and they had ever since been at deadly feud. Care was taken that the prisoner should pass through the same gate and the same streets through which Montrose had been led to the same doom. The troops who attended the procession were put under the command of Claverhouse, the fiercest and sternest of the race of Graham.'* Now, although the father of Argyle had not only been the head of the faction which put Montrose to death, but had, along with his son, the inconceivable meanness to be present at and exult over the indignities offered to that illustrious nobleman, it is not true that any chief of the gallant house of Graham stooped to imitate such a base example. Claverhouse was not there. The melodramatic effect of the narrative may suffer in consequence, but at present we are dealing with history, not romance. The impression which every one must receive from the foregoing passage is, that Claverhouse was expressly selected for the duty, in order to give a passing triumph, not only to a political cause, but also to a family feud. Knowing well how eagerly former Covenanting writers have fastened upon any pretext for casting a stain upon the memory of Claverhouse, it was with considerable astonishment that I found this statement brought forward for the first time by Mr. Macaulay. His mistake, in this instance, is

¹ losing] falling 1849²

precisely of a piece with the others. Wodrow quotes, accurately enough, the substance of the order given for bringing Argyle into Edinburgh—an order which was modified in its execution. That order bears that he shall be 'carried up the street bare-headed, with his hands tied behind his back, in the midst of Captain Graham's guards'. This is enough for Mr. Macaulay, who forthwith pounces upon the name, and, without stopping to consider who Captain Graham was, at once degrades Claverhouse from his rank, and identifies him with the officer of the guard! Hence the rhetorical flourish about the houses of Graham and Campbell. The real fact is, that the officer in question was Patrick Graham, a younger son of Inchbraikie, Captain of the Town-guard of Edinburgh, whose duty it was, irrespective of politics or family feuds, to be present at all public processions within the boundaries of the city. His name is given at full length in the original order; but Mr. Macaulay, having previously substituted James for John, now substitutes John for Patrick, and consequently is enabled to invest the scene with an additional, though spurious, hue of interest. Besides this, I am afraid that Mr. Macaulay's account of the procession must be considered as chiefly drawn from his own imagination. Argyle was by no means exposed to the same indignities which had been heaped upon Montrose, neither was his doom the same. Fountainhall, in his *Historical Observes*, a work of great interest, expressly tells us, that although it was mentioned that, 'when the Marquis of Montrose was brought up prisoner from the Watergate in a cart, this Argyle was feeding his eyes with the sight in the Lady Murray's balcony, in the Canongate, with her daughter, his lady, to whom he was newly married, and that he was seen smiling and playing with her'; yet that, 'seeing we condemn these rebellious tymes for their rigor, our great men (not knowing their owne destinies) *thought it no fit copy to imitate*—so that all that was done to him was, that he was met at the Watergate by Captain Graham's company and the hangman, who tied¹ his hands behind his back; and so the hangman going before him, he came up on his feet to the Castle, *but it was casten to be so late that he was little seen*'. It was ten o'clock at night before he arrived at the Watergate, so that any attempt at ignominious parade was avoided.

I cannot see how the memory of Argyle can be served by such exaggerations. Whatever may have been his previous delinquencies—and they were neither few nor trivial—he met his fate like a brave man, nor did any action of his life become him so much as its close. Claverhouse, who would joyfully have encountered him in the field, was infinitely above the littleness of triumphing over his political opponent.

¹ tied] tyed 1849²

The debt due to the memory of the great Montrose was fully discharged when his loyalty received its posthumous tribute, and the remains of the hero were deposited by his assembled kindred in the tomb. It is a pity that Mr. Macaulay, since he must needs take Wodrow as his authority, has not adhered closely to his text. In matters which were evidently public, and therefore open to common contradiction, Wodrow seldom ventures to wander far astray from the truth: it is in the alleys and by-lanes of his narrative that we detect him at his habitual sin. Mr. Macaulay, however, does not always follow Wodrow, but sometimes misinterprets Fountainhall. Thus, in his account of the riot at Edinburgh on 31st January 1686, he somewhat magniloquently tells us that 'the troops were already under arms. Conspicuous among them were Claverhouse's dragoons, the dread and abhorrence of Scotland'. His sole authority for saying so is the entry in Fountainhall's Diary that 'the Counsell calls in the assistance of Grame's company'. Not a dragoon was there. Patrick Graham, as usual, was summoned with the Town-guard; but that body, in the hands of Mr. Macaulay, multiplies like Falstaff's famous corps in buckram, and is ready on the shortest notice to figure as horse, foot, or artillery.

I trust that, in the foregoing remarks, I shall not be considered as having transgressed the proper bounds of courtesy. Mr. Macaulay's reputation is deservedly so high, that every statement emanating from his pen is liable to the minutest scrutiny; and I will fairly confess that I was not sorry to find the scattered charges which, from time to time, have been brought against Lord Dundee, concentrated in his volumes, since an accusation from so powerful a quarter must necessarily give some additional interest to the defence, however feebly executed. It is from no desire for controversy, far less from a wish to run counter to popular opinion, that I have approached this subject. I am fully aware of the weight of prejudice against which I have to contend; but from that prejudice I appeal to the truth, as I gather it from the records of the time. Some of my critics, for whose indulgence otherwise I am grateful, have been pleased to express themselves wrathfully at finding any terms of eulogy applied in the text towards an individual in the belief of whose misdeeds they have been hereditarily and traditionally trained. If my belief upon such points were the same with theirs, they should have had no cause of complaint. It is because I am convinced, after a most careful examination of the evidence—not of historians only, but of such as is afforded by the materials which ought to be the foundation of authentic history—that a large portion of our national annals has been most unfairly perverted, and that party strife and polemical rancour have combined to distort facts

and to blacken names for mere temporary and ephemeral purposes;—it is for these reasons solely that I have ventured to go back into¹ the disputed battle-fields of the past. I have taken nothing for granted, but have given an authority for each separate allegation; and if those authorities should happen to prove hostile to the preconceived impressions of any one, surely I am not to blame. If anything I have said can be proved to be wrong, I am willing to admit the error, but not otherwise. Meanwhile I am not ashamed of having attempted to defend the memory of Lord Dundee against unjust accusations, not preferred during his lifetime, but invented at a later period; for I can see no generosity, far less justice, in the conduct of those who are obstinately deaf to all evidence in favour of one whom they have been previously taught to condemn, and who seem to think that the strength of their own cause depends upon the amount of obloquy which they can contrive to heap upon its opponents.

¹ into] unto 1849²

APPENDIX II

FIRMILIAN: A TRAGEDY

[Blackwood's Magazine, May 1854]

WE have great pleasure in announcing to our readers the fact, that we have at last discovered that long-expected phenomenon, the coming Poet, and we trust that his light will very soon become visible in the literary horizon. We cannot, however, arrogate to ourselves any large share of merit in this discovery—indeed, we must confess, with a feeling akin to shame, that we ought to have made it at a much earlier date. *Firmilian* is not altogether new to us. We have an indistinct recollection of having seen the tragedy in manuscript well-nigh two years ago; and, if we remember aright, a rather animated correspondence took place on the subject of the return of the papers. We had, by some untoward accident, allowed them to find their way into the Balaam-box, which girdle of genius was at that particular time full up to the very hinges. We felt confident that *Firmilian* lay under the weight of some twenty solid layers of miscellaneous literature; and we should as soon have thought of attempting to disinter an ichthyosaurus from a slate-quarry, as of ransacking the bowels of the chest for that treasury of rare delights. However, we took care, on the occasion of the next incrementation, to make search for the missing article, and had the pleasure of returning it to Mr. Percy Jones, from whom we heard nothing further until we received his tragedy in print. Our first perusal having been rather of a cursory nature, we are not able to state with certainty whether the author has applied himself during the intervening period to the work of emendation; but we think it exceedingly probable that he has done so, as we now remark a degree of vivacity and force of expression, however extravagant many of the ideas may be, which had escaped our previous notice. We hope that, by a tardy act of justice, we shall offer no violence to that amiable modesty which has, in the meantime, restrained him from asking the verdict of the general public.

As to the actual amount of poetic genius and accomplishment which Mr. Percy Jones possesses, there may, even among the circle of his friends, be considerable difference of opinion. Those who admire spasmodic throes and writhings may possibly be inclined to exalt him to a very high pinnacle

of fame; for certainly, in no modern work of poetry—and there have been several recently published which might have borne the *imprimatur* of Bedlam—have we found so many symptoms of unmistakable lunacy. Still there is a method in his madness—a rapidity of perception and originality of thought, which contrasts very favourably with the tedious drivellings of some other writers of the same school. His taste is not one whit better than theirs, but he brings a finer fancy and a more vivid imagination to the task; nor is he deficient in a certain rude exaggerated dramatic power, which has more than once reminded us of the early style of Marlowe and the other predecessors of Shakespeare.

It is not very easy to comprehend the exact creed and method of the new school of poets, who have set themselves to work upon a principle hitherto unknown, or at all events unproclaimed. This much we know from themselves, that they regard poetry not only as a sacred calling, but as the most sacred of any—that, in their opinion, every social relation, every mundane tie, which can interfere with the bard's development, must be either disregarded or snapped asunder—and that they are, to the fainting race of Adam, the sole accredited bearers of the Amreeta cup of immortality. Such is the kind of nonsense regarding the nature of his mission which each fresh poetaster considers it his duty to enunciate; and as there is nothing, however absurd, which will not become credited by dint of constant repetition, we need not be surprised that some very extraordinary views regarding the 'rights of genius' should of late years have been countenanced by men who ought to have known better. Poets are, like all other authors or artisans, valuable according to the quality of the article which they produce. If their handiwork be good, genuine, and true, it will pass at once into circulation and be prized—if the reverse, what title can they prefer to the name which they so proudly arrogate to themselves?

We do not, however, quarrel with a poet for having an exalted idea of his art—always supposing that he has taken any pains to acquire its rudiments. Without a high feeling of this kind, it would be difficult to maintain the struggle which must precede eminent success; nor would we have alluded to the subject but for the affectation and offensive swaggering of some who may indeed be rhymsters, but who never could be poets even if their days were to be prolonged to the extent of those of Methusaleh. When the painter of the tavern sign-post, whereon is depicted a beer-bottle voiding its cork, and spontaneously ejecting its contents right and left into a couple of convenient tumblers, talks to us of high art, Raphael, and the effects of *chiaroscuro*, it is utterly impossible to control the action of the risible muscles. And,

in like manner, when one of our young poetical aspirants, on the strength of a trashy duodecimo filled with unintelligible ravings, asserts his claim to be considered as a prophet and a teacher, it is beyond the power of humanity to check the intolerable tickling of the midriff.

But, apart from their exaggerated notions of their calling, let us see what is the practice of the poets of the Spasmodic School. In the first place, they rarely, if ever, attempt anything like a plot. After you have finished the perusal of their verses, you find yourself just as wise as when you began. You cannot tell what they would be at. You have a confused recollection of stars, and sunbeams, and moonbeams, as if you had been staring at an orrery; but sun, moon, and stars, were intended to give light to something—and what that something is, in the poet's page, you cannot, for the life of you, discover. In the second place, we regret to say that they are often exceedingly profane, not, as we suppose, intentionally, but because they have not sense enough to see the limits which decency, as well as duty, prescribes. In the third place, they are occasionally very prurient. And, in the fourth place, they are almost always unintelligible.

Now, although we cannot by any means aver that Mr. Percy Jones is entirely free from the faults which we have just enumerated, we look upon him as a decidedly favourable specimen of his tribe. There is, in *Firmilian*, if not a plot, at least some kind of comprehensible action; and in it he has portrayed the leading features of the poetical school to which he belongs with so much fidelity and effect, that we feel called upon to give an outline of his tragedy, with a few specimens from the more remarkable scenes.

The hero of the piece, Firmilian, is a student in the university of Badajoz, a poet, and entirely devoted to his art. He has been engaged for some time in the composition of a tragedy upon the subject of Cain, which is 'to win the world by storm'; but he unfortunately discovers, after he has proceeded a certain length in his task, that he has not yet thoroughly informed himself, by experience, of the real nature of the agonies of remorse. He finds that he cannot do justice to his subject without steeping his own soul in guilt, so as to experience the pangs of the murderer; and as, according to the doctrines of the spasmodic school of poetry, such investigations are not only permitted, but highly laudable, he sets himself seriously to ponder with what victim he should begin. All our spasmodic poets introduce us to their heroes in their studies, and Mr. Percy Jones follows the tradition. He does not, however, like some of them, carry his imitative admiration of Goethe's *Faust* so far, as personally to evoke Lucifer or Mephistopheles—an omission for which we are really thankful. Firmilian begins by a soliloquy upon his frame of mind and feelings; and

states himself to be grievously perplexed and hindered in his work by his comparative state of innocence. He then meditates whether he should commence his course of practical remorse by putting to death Mariana, a young lady to whom he is attached, or three friends and fellow-students of his, with whom he is to dine next day. After much hesitation, he decides on the latter view, and, after looking up 'Raymond Lullius' for the composition of a certain powder, retires to rest after a beautiful but somewhat lengthy apostrophe to the moon. There is nothing in this scene which peculiarly challenges quotation. The next is occupied by love-making; and certainly, if Mr. Percy Jones had intended to exhibit his hero throughout in the most amiable and romantic light, nothing could be better than his appearance in the bower of Mariana. If, here and there, we encounter an occasional floridness, or even warmth of expression, we attribute that in a great measure to the sunny nature of the clime; just as we feel that the raptures of Romeo and Juliet are in accordance with the temperament of the land that gave them birth. But we presently find that Firmilian, though a poet, is a hypocrite and traitor in love. The next scene is laid in a tavern, where he and his friends, Garcia Perez, Alphonzo D'Aguilar, and Alonzo Olivarez are assembled, and there is a discussion, over the wine-cup, on the inexhaustible subject of knightly love. Alphonzo, claiming to be descended from the purest blood of Castile, asserts the superiority of European beauty over the rest of the universe; to which Firmilian, though known to be betrothed to Mariana, makes the following reply:—

['I knew a poet once; and he was young,' to 'Invade the vastness of his lady's lips'.—pp. 310-11.]

Judging from the implied character of the ditty in question, we are not sorry that we cannot lay it before our readers—indeed it does not appear in the volume, for D'Aguilar was so disgusted with the introduction that he openly reviled Firmilian as a pupil of Mahound, and bestowed a buffet on him, whereupon there was a flashing of swords. These, however, were sheathed, and the students again sat down amicably to drink. Firmilian, being suddenly called away, entertains his friends to amuse themselves, during his absence, with a special bottle of 'Ildefonso'—a vintage which we do not remember having seen in any modern list of wines. They comply—feel rather uncomfortable—and the scene concludes by the chaunt of a funeral procession beneath the window; an idea which we strongly suspect has been borrowed from Victor Hugo's tragedy of *Lucrèce Borgia*.

The next scene exhibits Firmilian pacing the cloisters. His three friends have died by poison, but he is not able by any means to conjure up a feeling of adequate remorse. He

does not see that he is at all responsible in the matter. If he had poured out the wine into their glasses, and looked upon their dying agonies, then, indeed, he might have experienced the desired sensation of guilt. But he did nothing of the kind. They helped themselves, of their own free will and accord, and died when he was out of the way. On the whole, then, his first experiment was a blunder. During his reverie, an old preceptor of his, the Priest of St. Nicholas, passes; and certain reminiscences of stripes suggest him as the next victim. The reader will presently see by what means this scheme is carried into execution. Suffice it to say, that the mere anticipation of it sheds a balm upon Firmilian's disappointed spirit, who, being now fully convinced that in a few days he will be able to realize the tortures of Cain, departs for an interview with Lilian, a young lady for whom he entertains a clandestine attachment. The next scene speaks for itself. [Sc. VI.—pp. 320-2.]

We back that scene, for intensity, against anything which has been written for the last dozen of years. Nay, we can even see in it traces of profound psychological observation. Firmilian, like Hamlet, is liable, especially on the eve of action, to fits of constitutional irresolution; and he requires, in order to nerve him to the deed, a more direct and plausible motive than that which originally prompted him. Hence we find him wavering, and almost inclined to abandon his purpose, until a casual passage in the choral hymn jars upon an excitable nerve, and urges him irresistibly forward. We shall presently find the same trait of character even more remarkably developed in another scene.

We then come to the obsequies of the students, which, being episodical, we may as well pass over. There are two ways of depicting grief—one quiet and impressive, the other stormy and clamorous. Mr. Percy Jones, as might have been expected, adopts the latter method; and we are bound to say that we have never perused anything in print so fearful as the ravings of the bereaved Countess D'Aguilar, mother of the unfortunate Alphonzo. She even forgets herself so far as (to) box the ears of the confessor who is officiously whispering consolation.

Meanwhile, where is the hero of the piece—the successful Guy Fawkes of the cathedral? Perched on a locality which never would have occurred to any but the most exalted imagination.

[Here follows Scene IX.—pp. 329-33.]

There is a grand recklessness and savage energy displayed in this scene, which greatly increases our admiration of the author's abilities. He seems, indeed, in the fair way of making the spasmodic school famous in modern literature. With the death of Haverillo an ordinary writer would have

paused—not so Percy Jones, who, with a fine aptitude for destruction, makes his hero, Firmilian, kill two birds with one stone. The manner in which he accomplishes this feat is most ingenious. He maintains the unity of the design by a very slight alteration of the locality. Whilst the two poets are ominously conversing on the summit of the pillar, a critic, affected by an intolerable itch for notoriety, is prowling in the square beneath—

[Here follows Scene X.— pp. 333-5.]

We then find Firmilian wandering among the mountains, and lavishing a superfluity of apostrophe upon the rocks, forests, and cataracts around him. Whatever may be his moral deficiencies, we are constrained to admit that he must have studied the phenomena of nature to considerable purpose at the University of Badajoz, since he explains, in no fewer than twelve pages of blank verse, the glacier theory, entreating his own attention—for no one is with him—to the striated surface of rocks and the forcible displacement of boulders. He then, by way of amusement, works out a question in conic sections. But, notwithstanding these exertions, he is obviously not happy. He is still as far as ever from his grand object, the thorough appreciation of remorse—for he can assign a distinct moral motive for each atrocity which he has committed. He at last reluctantly arrives at the conclusion that he is not the party destined—

To shrine that page of history in song,

[and ten and a half lines more, as on p. 345, ll. 77-88.]

If this view of the powers of poets and poetry be correct, commend us to the continuance of a lengthened period of prose!

Firmilian then begins to look about him for a new subject, and a new course of initiative discipline. Magic first occurs to him—but he very speedily abandons that idea, from a natural terror of facing the fiend, and a wholesome dread of the Inquisition. He admits having made already one or two experiments in that line, and narrates, with evident horror, how he drew a chalk circle in his apartments, kindled a brazier, and began an incantation, when suddenly a lurid light appeared in the sockets of a skull upon the shelf, and so nearly threw him into convulsions that he could barely mutter the exorcism. (It appears, from another part of the poem, that this exploit had been detected by his servant, a spy of the Inquisition, in consequence of his having neglected to erase the cabalistic markings in chalk, and was of course immediately reported.) At last he determines to fall back upon sensuality, and to devote his unexampled talents to a grand poem upon the amours of the Heathen deities. He states, with much show of truth, that the tone

of morals which an exclusively classical education is apt to give, cannot but be favourable to an extensive and sublime erotic undertaking—and that the youthful appetite, early stimulated by the perusal of the Pantheon, and the works of Ovid, Juvenal, and Catullus, will eagerly turn to anything in the vernacular which promises still stronger excitement. We shall not venture, at the present, to apply ourselves seriously to that question.

That Firmilian—for we shall not say Mr. Percy Jones—was well qualified for such an undertaking as he finally resolved to prosecute, must be evident to every one who has perused the earliest extract we have given; and we shall certainly hold ourselves excused from quoting the terms of the course of study which he now proposes to himself. Seriously, it is full time that the prurient and indecent tone which has liberally manifested itself in the writings of the young spasmodic poets should be checked. It is so far from occasional, that it has become a main feature of their school; and in one production of the kind, most shamefully bepuffed, the hero was represented as carrying on an intrigue with the kept-mistress of Lucifer! If we do not comment upon more recent instances of marked impurity, it is because we hope the offence will not be repeated. Meantime, let us back to Firmilian.

As he approaches the catastrophe, we remark, with infinite gratification, that Mr. Percy Jones takes pains to show that he is not personally identified with the opinions of his hero. Up to the point which we have now reached, there has been nothing to convince us that Jones did not intend Firmilian to be admired—but we are thankful to say that before the conclusion we are undeceived. Jones, though quite as spasmodic as the best of them, *has* a sense of morals; and we do not know that we ever read anything better, in its way, than the following scene:—

[Sc. XIV.—pp. 349-52.]

Bravo, Percy! The first part of that scene is managed with a dexterity which old Dekker might have applauded, and the conclusion shows a perfect knowledge of womanly character and feeling. Firmilian is now cast beyond the pale of society, and in imminent danger, if apprehended, of taking a conspicuous part in an *auto-da-fé*. An author of inferior genius would probably have consigned him to the custody of the Familiars, in which case we should have had a dungeon and rack scene, if not absolute incrimination as the catastrophe. But Jones knew better. He felt that such a cruel fate might, by the effect of contrast, revive some kind of sympathy in the mind of the reader for Firmilian, and he has accordingly adopted the wiser plan of depicting him as the victim of his own haunted imagination. The

closing scene is so eminently graphic, and so perfectly original, that we give it entire.

[As in pp. 352-4.]

And so ends the tragedy of Firmilian.

It is rather difficult to give a serious opinion upon the merits of such a production as this. It is, of course, utterly extravagant; but so are the whole of the writings of the poets of the Spasmodic school; and, in the eyes of a considerable body of modern critics, extravagance is regarded as a proof of extraordinary genius. It is, here and there, highly coloured; but that also is looked upon as a symptom of the divine afflatus, and rather prized than otherwise. In one point of proclaimed spasmodic excellence, perhaps it fails. You can always tell what Percy Jones is after, even when he is dealing with 'shuddering stars', 'gibbous moons', 'imposthumes of hell', and the like; whereas you may read through twenty pages of the more ordinary stuff without being able to discern what the writers mean—and no wonder, for they really mean nothing. They are simply writing nonsense-verses; but they contrive, by blazing away whole rounds of metaphor, to mask their absolute poverty of thought, and to convey the impression that there must be something stupendous under so heavy a canopy of smoke. If, therefore, intelligibility¹, which is the highest degree of obscurity, is to be considered a poetic excellence, we are afraid that Jones must yield the palm to several of his contemporaries; if, on the contrary, perspicuity is to be regarded as a virtue, we do not hesitate in assigning the spasmodic prize to the author of *Firmilian*. To him the old lines on Marlowe, with the alteration of the name, might be applied—

Next Percy Jones, bathed in the Thespian Springs,
Had in him those brave sublunary Things
That your first Poets had; his Raptures were
All Air and Fire, which made his Verses clear;
For that fierce Madness still he did retain,
Which rightly should possess a Poet's Brain.

¹ So in *Blackwood*; read 'unintelligibility'.

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